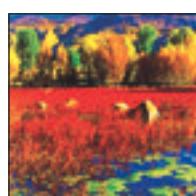


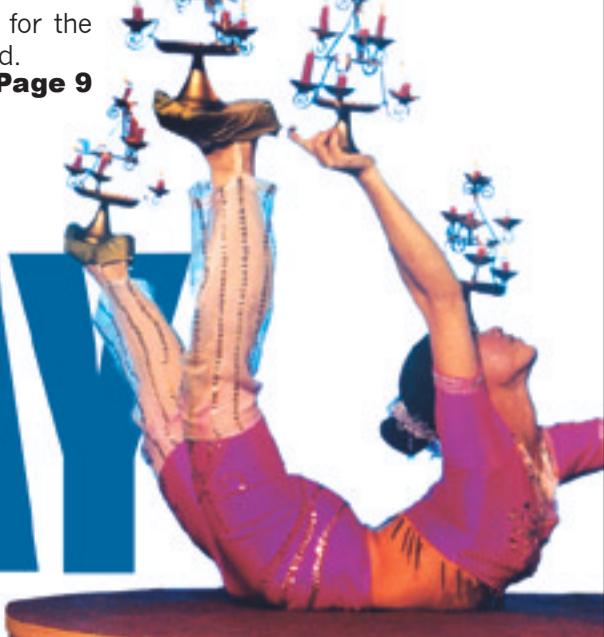
Beauty comes at a price in this otherworldly place. **Page 16**



Roast duck restaurants outsmart traditional competition. **Page 14**



Acrobatics is the best medicine for the wife but is torture for the husband. **Page 9**



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Mayor Maps out Olympic Outlook

By Xiao Rong

Beijing is to renovate crumbling residences in the 62 square km downtown area to guarantee a better living environment in the run up to the 2008 Olympic Games.

"In achieving our goal of hosting the best ever Olympics, it's essential to improve people's living standards and safeguard their interests instead of simply holding the Games," mayor Liu Qi stressed at a press conference last Friday.

2003 is a crucial year for Olympic preparation work, focusing on stadium construction, marketing, environmental protection and the transportation network, said the mayor.

Olympic construction projects will mainly rely on inviting international bids, guaranteeing transparency and fairness as well as following international practices, according to Liu.

He said that construction of the main projects is to begin in the latter half of the year. The emblem for the 2008 Olympics will be announced in April and the marketing plan will be launched in May.

To better solve the traffic problems in the capital, a comprehensive network of railway transportation is being planned, with the total length of city railways to reach 300 kilometers by 2008.

To reduce air pollution, the mayor mapped out the promising prospect that for 60 percent of the coming year, capital residents will enjoy air quality of or better than grade II.

Liu summarized that Beijing's modernization with sound economic development will lay a solid foundation for the city to achieve the goal of "Scientific Olympics, Green Olympics and People's Olympics".

Our New Long Marchers Andy McEwen and Ed Jocelyn have sent Beijing Today the second chapter of their ongoing adventure. Enjoy it by sharing the loneliness of two Englishmen far away from the usual creature comforts.



The exhausted New Long Marchers take a break 200 meters above the Dong minority village of Longping, their last stop before crossing the Guangxi-Hunan border on December 15.

Topsy-turvy World of the New Long March

By Ed Jocelyn / Andy McEwen

During the course of a typical English suburban childhood, there are three fascinating facts to be learned about China.

By far the most enthralling — one every English schoolboy knows — is that if all the people of China were to jump up and down simultaneously, the resulting tidal wave would engulf Western Europe. But it's only a theory of course. Nobody ever actually tried it.

Marshalling the masses into making a giant leap forward, rather than upward, Chairman Mao might have missed out on the second most interesting fact about the People's Republic available to an English suburban child. And that is, if you start digging a hole in an English garden — and then keep digging for a very, very long time — eventually — say, after a week, you will come out on the other side of the Earth and find yourself in China.

That is because China — and this is the third most fas-



cinating fact of all — is upside down, like Australia. It's only gravity that prevents Chinese people from falling off the bottom of the planet.

Philosophers can debate the tidal wave and excavation theories, but the third fact is indisputable.

For indeed, during the course of this New Long March, the world has turned completely upside down. All things once deemed impossible are now possible.

"You know I woke up this morning and thought 'I really want a KFC chicken burger!' It's not often you wake up and think a thing like that," Ed said today.

Before the New Long March, Ed could never have said something so simultaneously stupid and dull. But dialectically, that is what makes it so interesting.

(See Page 2)



Cloning Claim Reignites

Brigitte Boisselier (middle), after the press conference held in Florida December 27 to announce clone birth Xinhua/Reuters Photo

Fierce Debate

By Xiao Rong

A new round of controversy has been stirred up in China about the ethics of human cloning, following the birth last Thursday of the world's first cloned human.

The Ministry of Public Health reaffirmed its position that any reproductive cloning tests will not be approved, granted, supported and acknowledged under any circumstances.

Aside from governmental opposition to human cloning, most Chinese scientists and ethical experts expressed their concerns over the safety of cloning technology and called for strict regulations on its use.

Among overwhelming condemnation, one voice has been raised in support of the research.

"The official position of the Ministry of Public Health lacks basic discretion and objectiveness, which will only block the healthy progress of China's cloning technology," argued He Zuoxiu, renowned expert in the field of theoretical physics.

The 75-year-old academician from the Chinese Academy of Sciences avowed his firm belief in human cloning during *Beijing Today's* exclusive interview. Professor He is one of the few scientists in China to publicly support cloning technology, stating his position as early as 1997, one year after Dolly the sheep was born.

"I do admit the current risk of cloning technology, and worry about the possible abnormalities it may bring about in cloning humans," said He. "But I am opposed to banning human cloning solely on ethical grounds."

Professor He feels it won't be difficult to regulate the role of cloned humans in society because a clone is actually an identical twin of its "parent".

albeit a younger version. It can be called grandchild, son or daughter, sister or brother according to the age of the clone, compared to the source of the genetic material.

But some ethicists contend that this is not the main reason for their criticism. Demeaning human dignity by artificially creating a human being through cloning is what really matters.

"Human cloning is a retrogressive step from sexual to asexual reproduction, which will harm the diversity of human genes and may trigger unknown diseases," said Shen Mingxian, director of the Ethics Department of the Southern Research Center of the Chinese National Human Genome Center.

Shen told *Beijing Today* that the attempt to clone human beings while animal cloning has proved to be so risky is irresponsible. It will only result in disasters by harming the interests of human kind.

Meanwhile, He Zuoxiu argues that it's better to manipulate the evolution of human kind through cloning technology rather than by natural selection.

"It's also ridiculous to imagine that human cloning would lead to a huge amount of clones with identical genes. Even if scientists clone a thousand He Zuoxius, they will be quite different due to environmental differences in the womb and upbringing," said He.

Professor He agreed we should minimize any possible side effects of scientific technology by establishing proper guidelines, but the technology itself should be given enough space for healthy development.

"Any scientific technology is a double-edged sword and may bring about both favorable and unfavorable effects to the world, like the A-bomb," said Shen.

and X-rays," added He. "We cannot ban the research of a technology just because it's not perfect now. The main problem of the human cloning issue is that our ethics lag far behind the progress of modern technology."

He appealed for the improvement of ethical rules to serve the common interests of human kind as well as the sound development of science.

"A cloned baby is first a human, but it's those ethicists that have deprived their right to be born. For infertile couples, homosexuals or couples whose child has died, why shouldn't human cloning help them?" said He.

Shen Mingxian echoed He's view that ethics should evolve with the development of scientific technologies, but he stressed the importance of maintaining the stability of the ethical rules of society.

"Not all that technology could achieve should be achieved. Respect for human values and protection of human dignity in the process of scientific development can never be overemphasized," said Shen.

Shen expressed the worry that embarking on human cloning projects without proper regulations or guidelines may lead to abuse of the technology for commercial profits.

Facing the claim that the world's first cloned baby has been born, both He and Shen were skeptical as to its veracity.

If the baby girl is verified to be a real clone, said the two experts, she deserves equal respect and care just like any other child.

"The child is innocent after all and should not be either discriminated or privileged just because of her identity. It's those who created her that we should denounce," said Shen.

When a Cloned Child was Born

By Xiao Rong

The birth of allegedly the world's first cloned human was met with a chorus of denunciation and skepticism among the international scientific community.

Nicknamed "Eve", the newborn was claimed last Friday to be the replica of her mother by Clonaid, a cloning company under the Quebec-based Raelian sect that believes life on earth was created by extra-terrestrials through genetic engineering 25,000 years ago.

Brigitte Boisselier, chief executive of Clonaid, said the 7-pound girl was delivered by caesarean section last Thursday but she declined to reveal where the cloned baby was born. Nor did she announce the identity of the 31-year-old American mother.

The baby will be facing an independent DNA test either this weekend or early next week to verify whether she is really a clone, said Boisselier. Former ABC News science editor, Michael Guillen, is expected to be chosen to do the test.

The announced birth was met with overwhelming doubt and condemnation on ethical grounds, as well as an appeal by government leaders for a global ban on human cloning.

"The announcement in itself is an expression of a brutal mentality, devoid of any ethical and human consideration," said the statement from papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

French President Jacques Chirac strongly condemned the cloning and repeated calls for a worldwide ban on attempts to clone humans, which he said was "contrary to the dignity of man".

American President George Bush also expressed his concern over the human clone issue. The need for the new Congress to act on bipartisan legislation to ban all human cloning was renewed by White House spokesman Scott McClellan last Friday.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which regulates human experiments, has launched an investigation into whether Clonaid illegally performed any of the work on U.S. soil.

The United States has proposed a U.N. treaty banning all human cloning, but France and Germany have proposed an alternative to ban reproductive cloning but allow therapeutic cloning, which can be used to cure diseases like diabetes and cancer.

Despite worldwide outrage and skepticism, Brigitte Boisselier, insisted the feat would be scientifically proved, saying a second cloned baby is due next week to a lesbian couple in northern Europe.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

Education for Profit

By Ema Ma

The dispute over the industrialization of education culminated when the Law to Promote Private Education was finally approved last Saturday. For the first time in China, making money from education is legitimate. The law will go into effect on September 1.

In the past, education institutions have been banned from pursuing any activities for profit. However, with the concept of life-long education being accepted by more and more Chinese people,

calls to abolish this outdated clause have become louder.

With the exception of compulsory education, the huge education market from preschool to retirement is almost a blank in China. That is why numerous investors, both local and overseas, have eagerly sought any loopholes. The English training market right now in Beijing is one case. The world's biggest private education group, Nobell and the most celebrated education resources website in Amer-

ica, Eduventures have already prepared to enter the China market.

With the passing of the law, debate on the industrialization of education has become increasingly intense:

One side argued; some investors have gained huge profit in the name of the so-called "noble school," violating the principle of equal education opportunities for all. "Industrialization does not mean commercialization. As a special industry, the education

sector can not be completely operated in the hands of market," points out Wu Jinglian, a renowned economist.

The other side, however, argued that the industrialization of education will encourage more investors to make up the government's insufficiency in terms of funds and qualified teachers. "Merely giving money is not realistic in China's present situation, considering the underdeveloped mechanism of public funding. More surplus capital will flow into this untapped seller's market only when the investors are permitted to gain profit," said an official from education authority.

In the middle ground, most scholars agree that the entire edu-

cation market should be divided into public and private sectors. Besides the not-for-profit government funded compulsory education, market orientation is needed for the remaining sectors of higher education, adult education and other non-basic education. At the same time, private-support scholarship should be brought into the market like the higher education to ensure equal opportunity.

While lawmakers are immersed in endless arguments over the extent of commercialization, the demand for continuing education seemed to have run riot. Education has become the third largest expenditure after the home and car for ordinary people, according to polls.

City Establishes Financial Office

By Shan Jinliang

The Financial Office under the Beijing Municipal Government made its debut late last week to promote credit card business, through which one quarter of the city's consumption purchases will be made by 2008.

Beijing is poised to promote credit card business this year by offering favorable policies, said Cheng Yanhong, director of the office. The settlement volume of deals by credit cards is currently less than five percent, while in developed countries it is almost 50 percent.

The office will be responsible for the city's financial environment construction, financial supervision and financial risk prevention. Beijing had 52 financial institutions by the end of June last year, and finance is now a pillar industry, accounting for 15.3 percent of the city's gross domestic product.

Shenzhou IV Orbits the Earth

China launched its fourth unmanned spacecraft Shenzhou IV using a Long March II F carrier rocket early Monday from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Gansu Province. The launch brings China one step closer to manned space travel. Controllers in the launch center monitor Shenzhou IV's flight

By Ema Ma

Work began on the No. 5 subway line last Friday. When complete, the new subway line will run 27.6 kilometers from the Beijing Development Area (BDA) in the south to Changping District in the north of the city. The project will require an investment of about 12 billion yuan, and is scheduled for completion in 2006.

The design of the No. 5 line incorporates facilities making it accessible to the disabled and includes large-scale parking lots at either end to help alleviate traffic jams in the downtown areas.

Third Stage of World Trade Center Launched

By Hou Mingxin

The third stage of the China World Trade Center (Guomao) was officially launched at a press conference last week.

The 300-meter-high new building will have a construction area of 540,000 square meters, with total investment estimated to be more than US \$800 million. According to officials from municipal government, the new trade center will be a "symbolic construction of the city."

The third stage project of the China World Trade Center is also one of the major projects of Beijing central business district, which will accommodate leading domestic and international corporations.

The Beijing government has set up a series of policies to compensate residents and companies that will have to move to make way for the project. According to an official, compensation measures include money and various kinds of services.

The first stage of the China World Trade Center went into operation in 1990. The third stage of the project is scheduled for completion in 2007.

Overhaul for Third Ring Road

By Ema Ma

Repair work began on the Third Ring Road last Saturday, and is expected to be completed by August.

Forty-eight kilometers long, with over 40 overpasses and with an average daily traffic of 200,000 vehicles, the Third Ring Road, along with the recently repaired Second Ring Road, carries over 40 percent of the city's traffic.

By reinforcing the surface of the road, expanding lighting and extending the green belt, travel on the road will be made more comfortable for drivers.

In order to reduce disruption of traffic, most of the work will be done at night.



Xinhua Photo

Philips Wins Intellectual Property Case

By Ema Ma

Royal Philips Electronics won a lawsuit against the State Intellectual Property Office (Sipo) related to an industrial design patent recently.

The court rescinded the decision made by Sipo that rejected Philips's request to declare a patent for a razor by Yang Weijiang as null and void. "Sipo must reconsider its decision," said the court in its ruling.

In the legal proceedings filed on March 6 this year,

Philips claimed: "The razor design patent granted to the applicant, Yang Weijiang, is actually the same as the product of Philips registered before in Sipo. Therefore, Yang's intellectual property right should be declared invalid."

However, the Patent Re-examination Board concluded that there were conspicuous differences between the two products, and that customers were unlikely to confuse the two products.

The final decision made

by the court states that the difference between the two patents is mainly reflected in the head of the razor.

Since revisions to the patent law went into effect on July 1, 2001, decisions made by the Patent Re-examination Board are no longer final. The patentees have the right to seek judicial remedies if they are not satisfied with the results handed down by the board.

But the examination experts from Sipo seemed to accept the decision, with cer-

tain qualifications: "Whether or not the patent should be granted is somewhat concerned with the judgments based on reviewer's experiences and technical knowledge, not the written rules.

In order to lessen the chance of an error of judgment, the Re-examination Board usually consists of three experts with rich experiences in the approval of patents. Considering this, how can the court's judgment be unquestionable right?" queried Li Ju, the senior reviewer from Sipo.

electric street of three — no wait — four-story buildings. Some, Andy noted with mounting excitement, were spectacularly ugly.

We finally entered the filthy, litter-lined main street of this typical Chinese conurbation to be met by bored young men on motorbikes yelling "hello" and almost fell to our knees in delight. White lavatory tiles and karaoke opportunities surrounded us in all directions.

"It's the most beautiful thing I have ever seen," said Ed — his new habit really kicking in that day.

When the original Long Marchers passed through a typical small town — and Huaijiang could not have been more typical — the leaders would make sure to snaffle all the fanciest lodgings available. Likewise for us *laowais*.

We proceeded to the Fen-

Maglev on Trial

The Shanghai Transrapid Maglev Line, a high-speed transportation system, was put into trial operation on Monday.

The Shanghai Maglev is the world's first and only high-speed commercial commuting system using the state-of-the-art technology.

The line links bustling Pudong Airport with the subway system that runs through Shanghai's urban areas, cutting traveling time from the airport to downtown Shanghai from about an hour to just eight minutes.



Xinhua Photo

New Long March

(Continued from page 1)

For on the New Long March everything once deemed ugly and hateful has become beautiful and beloved. And vice-versa.

Since leaving Quanzhou 13 days ago, we have marched 320 kilometers over three mountain ranges. Traversing raging rapids and wild waterfalls, we have seen magnificent mountain peaks, tilled terraces and kick-ass karst landscapes. Colorful peasants speaking in strange tongues have welcomed us to drink cold tea in their mudbrick and wooden homes.

When we asked a real Long Marcher a while ago back in Beijing what he made of all the natural splendor, he said, "Frankly at the time, I didn't

much care for it."

Now we know exactly what he means. One day almost a month ago, we found the right trail and descended through the bracken to wade across a sparkling twilit stream towards our appointment with the historic town of Huaijiang.

A villager carrying a live rat home for dinner directed us — wrongly, as it transpired — towards our goal. Coming down the last mountain path at 6:30, we tramped past curious mumblering from within wooden cabin homes and caught glimpses of shadowy figures gathered around glowing hearths. Some beckoned us in, but on we still trudged.

We turned a corner and there it was — a shimmering

hong Hotel and, safe inside our rooms, removed bushels of prickly shrubbery from various small and medium-sized orifices. In the bathroom, there was a hot shower and — the clincher — a Western toilet.

We paid our 50 yuan, locked the door and rested our weary heads on fluffy laundered pillows. For a moment, as he closed his eyes, Andy feared gravity might suddenly stop working and he would wake up face down in the wilderness.

But the warbling of a night-time troubadour echoing from some distant fairyland reminded Andy he was warm and safe indoors.

"Our modernizing motherland is magnificent," crooned the pink parlor performer.

"Indeed it is," mumbled Andy, and fell into a deep blue electric dream.



China's First Fund JV Debuts in Shenzhen

By Hou Mingxin

On December 30, 2002, Dutch financial giant International Netherlands Groups (ING) announced that it had established China's first joint fund managing company in the southern city of Shenzhen, according to major state media.

ING holds 30 percent of the new venture which has registered a capital of 100 million yuan. ING's main partner, China Merchant Securities Co. Ltd, holds 40 percent, while the other three partners China State Power Finance Co. Ltd, China Huaneng Finance Co. Ltd, and COSCO Finance Co. Ltd each own 10 percent.

ING and its partners have received official approval from the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) on December 26, as a key step in the gradual opening of the country's huge financial markets, according to a report published in Shanghai-based *Securities News*.

The ING venture would put out its first fund in early 2003, which could total two to three billion yuan, according to a senior ING executive.

Three other foreign ventures including Fortis NV, Allianz AG, and Société Générale have received initial approval from CSRC to set up such funds, but they have not announced formal launches yet.

Under China's WTO commitments, foreign partners may hold up to 33 percent of joint ventures funds, increasing to 49 percent in the three years following WTO entry.

Beijing Logistics Harbor Now Under Construction

By Ema Ma

Beijing Logistics Harbor, invested with 10 billion yuan, is now officially under construction.

Located in the southeast of Beijing, beside the expressway joining Beijing with Tianjin and Tanggu, Northern China's two major ports, the harbor's key position will make Beijing the new destination port for container transportation by sea, as well as support the logistics of the nearby Central Business District (CBD) and Beijing Development Area (BDA).

By the time of its expected completion in 2007, the harbor will provide a series of services on warehousing, customs, distribution, packaging, garbage disposal, exhibition and other related services in banking, insurance accounting and law.

According to plan, the annual capacity for container handling will reach 300,000 units. Meanwhile some internationally known chain shopping malls have already expressed interest in cooperating with the harbor.

The Hong Kong-based investor, Beijing Holdings Ltd (with 60 percent of shares) is said to have intimate ties with the government. Its president and general manager were respectively ex-vice mayor of Beijing and ex-chairman of Beijing Municipal Foreign Economic Relations & Trade Commission.

Logistics are known in the industry for being the "Third Source of Profit," as reported warehousing and transportation expenditures account for 40 percent of all manufacturing costs in China. Annual logistics expenditures amounted to 1,788 billion yuan in 2001, accounting for 20 percent of the GDP.

If these expenses were to decrease by only one percent, total costs could be cut down to 17.8 billion yuan. Experts estimate that China's logistics industry will truly take off in the next decade.

Zhongguancun Launches First Overseas R&D Organ

By Shan Jinliang

The Zhongguancun Administrative Committee announced last week that the Zhongguancun Science Park had established its first overseas Research and Development (R&D) branch in the University of Maryland, US.

As a central R&D and IT center in China, the Science Park not only attracts a number of world-leading IT companies, including *Fortune's* 500 companies, but also encourages companies within the park to establish branches, R&D centers and production bases overseas, before helping them to enter the world market.

The committee has decided to set up R&D centers and production bases in India, Vietnam, Russia and other countries later this year, and is now discussing establishing overseas incubators for Chinese companies.

The park already has four overseas liaison offices in the Silicon Valley (US), Tokyo (Japan), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Toronto (Canada) to introduce China to overseas technology scholars.

Huaxia Bank Soon to Be Listed

By Shan Jinliang

Huaxia Bank won approval from CRSC to launch its initial public offering (IPO) in the domestic yuan-dominated A-share market last week, but the date of listing is undecided.

Previously the board of directors of Huaxia Bank said the listing plan will issue one billion shares in the A-share market with a per share price of four to five yuan. The funds from the market will be utilized to enlarge the office scale, including the application and registration of overseas branches.

Established in October 1992, Huaxia Bank is a Beijing-based nationwide commercial bank, and it will become the fifth listed bank in China following Shenzhen Development Bank, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank, China Minsheng Banking and China Merchants Bank. Shenzhen Development was listed in the Shenzhen Stock Market in April 1991. The four major state-owned banks, including China Construction Bank and others, expressed the same hope to list in the market.

China State Power Breaks Monopoly

By Shan Jinliang

China makes another step in breaking the country's monopoly by splitting the State Power Corporation into eleven small firms on December 29. This initiative will hopefully introduce private and foreign capital to the industry, as well as lower the price of electricity.

With two million staff members and 145 million dollars in assets, State Power Corporation used to be the largest monopoly in China, ranking 77th in the *Fortune's* 500 last year. This last step was seen as a solid effort to advance the country's market economy reform and encourage market competition among state-owned com-

panies, after breaking the telecommunications industry in December 2001 and the civil air industry last October.

The same day, the State Power Regulatory Commission was established to replace the previous market player in overseeing the industry.

Private and foreign capital on the way

According to the reform, the power-generating assets of the State Power Corporation will be shared by five companies, each holding an annual electricity-generating capacity of 32 million kilowatts, less than 20 percent of the total assets. Grid operation will be divided into two separate operators, State Pow-

er Grid and Southern Power Grid, which will compete for contracts with the above five power generating companies. Meanwhile, four other companies will be established in the new year, soon to be followed by asset and financial auditing and a power trading center.

Electricity price dropping

The reform aroused nationwide attention, as it was hoped electricity prices would drop. While no formal

Power Law exists yet, analysts say it will not affect the progress of electricity price reform.

Beginning early last year, a few electricity companies have already cut their prices, and Huaneng International and four electricity listed companies in Guangdong province reduced their prices by 15 to 20 percent last October. *Economy Information Daily* predicted that the electricity price will fall further very soon.

China Unicom Bets on CDMA Profits in 2003

By Tony Shaw

China's second largest telecommunications operator, China Unicom, announced on the eve of the new year that it would develop 13 million CDMA users in 2003, three million more than the previous plan. Industry analysts said it will be risky for Unicom, but it may be the only way to compete with its big brother, China Mobile.

China Unicom's 13-million goal was set after its president Wang Jianzhou claimed that Unicom's CDMA (Code division multiple access) network users had exceeded seven million by December 25, 2002, according to the annual plan.

Experts say it was tough for China Unicom because the number of CDMA users was only one million last June; however, it will be even harder this year as China Mobile starts to fight back with favorable policies to stabilize its GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) user number from last month.

China Mobile fights back

Market statistics indicate that in the past few months, China Unicom has reduced its preferential policies on individual CDMA users while offering more preferential prices to group



Wang Jianzhou, president of China Unicom

Photo by Photocome

buyers. Analysts say the higher number of CDMA users expected this year, coupled with increasing pressure from the industry, has forced the company to rely on group buyers to secure the increase of CDMA users.

In Beijing, with a guarantee from the company, a group of at least 50 people can purchase CDMA mobile phones with zero down payment, once the users sign a contract with Unicom to use the network for over two years and make calls for an monthly fee of no less than 200 yuan. Unicom sets up a suppositional network or intranet for 50 people, so that the calling fee

within the group is cut in half. Other major cities such as Guangzhou also offer preferential advantages to users, such as 30 percent off calling fees. So far, China Unicom's efforts have been applauded by the market ever since they were promoted last October.

Apparently a large number of new CDMA users are former GPRS users of China Mobile, since the number of CDMA users has grown much faster than mobile phone users. Furthermore, China Mobile has issued measures to stabilize high-end phone users in Guangdong, a key market for the two leading telecom operators.

From the end of last month, China Mobile's Guangdong branch offered 6,000 mobile phones free of charge or at a favorable price to its users, as only part of the one million mobile phone purchasing plan this year. The new phones are expected to exceed by a few times the number of phones purchased from China Unicom last year.

High cost, high risk

Insider analysts say China Unicom has paid a high price for its rapid expansion since it began to develop CDMA on January 8, 2002. Each new CDMA user costs at least 200 to 400 yuan, and if the seven million CDMA

user goal was reached as claimed, the company must have paid 800 to 16,000 million yuan.

China Unicom's half-year report showed that CDMA revenues were only 454 million yuan, while the business cost was 1.057 billion yuan, and the loss was almost 600 million yuan.

Under this high cost pressure, China Unicom will complete the second phase of the CDMA network in early 2003 with a volume of 30 million users. As analyzed by *Beijing Times*, the second phase requires a greater number of CDMA users, so if the number of CDMA users fails to meet the challenge, a bigger loss will arise from the inefficiently used network. On the other hand, if a large amount of subsidies is spent on attracting more users to the market, the much higher cost will make achieving the profit goal impossible.

While China Mobile takes measures to stabilize its high-end consumer market in the new year, other problems on the horizon are troubling current CDMA users. Some say CDMA mobile phones are not easy to fix, and they find being indisposed to use the same phone for two years quite an inconvenience.

Department Stores Grab Home Appliance Market

By Shan Jinliang

On the eve of its 10th anniversary celebration, Blue Island Mansion announced it would open two to four more home appliance chain stores in the new year, and *Beijing Evening News* reported that Xidan Department Store and Cuiwei Tower are also preparing to launch their own home appliance stores.

Both Xidan and Cuiwei declined to give *Beijing Today* any details on the future chain stores but did not deny the information. The above-mentioned three are among the few stores which have maintained their home appliance departments. Most of the city's department stores abandoned their home appliance business from 1997, due to sharply cut profits re-

sulting from the growing number of home appliance chain stores such as Dazhong, Gome, and later Suning.

Although department stores Blue Island, Xidan, Cuiwei, Chang'an Market and Shuang'an Market all still retain their home appliance section, they are no longer a major source of profit, said Huang Hao, general manager of Blue Island. However, they may still attract more consumers to buy clothes and costumes.

Huang Hao said in keeping with the trend of home appliance chain stores, Blue Island opened Computer Franchise Store in rural Tongzhou District in 2000, as well as Longhua Blue Island Home Appliance Square in rural Shunyi District in 2001. "All home appliances and computers are

distributed to the chain store and Blue Island Mansion by the same center, to cut costs," said Huang.

The new chain stores will be located in the newly developed areas of Wangjing, Changping and around the West Fourth Ring Road, in order to avoid strong competition from Dazhong, Gome and Suning. At the same time, Huang Xuuhong, general manager of Gome Beijing, said it will expand its store to rural districts such as Changping, Shunyi and Huairou in the first half of this year, to avoid the already fierce competition in town.

"Our brand name is a big advantage, but Dazhong and other home appliance chain stores are also building up their brands," said Huang Hao, admitting the pressure he felt.

Industry experts predict that management expertise and capital will be no obstacles for the new chain stores' initial development, but that their competing scale will result in bottleneck. Gome said the home appliance chain store market is presently far from saturation, which explains the sudden entrepreneurship of these department stores.



Blue Island Mansion Photo by Xiao Shan

By Shan Jinliang

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Established in October 1992, Huaxia Bank is a Beijing-based nationwide commercial bank, and it will become the fifth listed bank in China following Shenzhen Development Bank, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank, China Minsheng Banking and China Merchants Bank. Shenzhen Development was listed in the Shenzhen Stock Market in April 1991. The four major state-owned banks, including China Construction Bank and others, expressed the same hope to list in the market.

Washington to Give Nanotech \$37B Boost

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29 (thedeal.com) - New legislation now before President Bush could result in \$37 billion in new funding over the next five years for the National Science Foundation - money that is expected to boost venture capital investments in nanotechnology and emerging biotech sectors.

The bill authorizes \$5.5 billion in funds for 2003, rising to \$9.83 billion by 2007, for the Foundation, a primary source of research grants for universities and, in turn, many start-up companies.

The increased funding is specifically targeting research on campus and startups involved in nanotechnology and plant genome research and applications.

(Katherine Goncharoff)

New Center for Nanoscience Innovation Transfers

Santa Barbara, California - The Center for Nanoscience Innovation for Defense has been created to facilitate the transition of research innovation in the nanosciences into applications. The US government

promised an allocation of \$20 million over three years. The State of California is matching every \$2 of non-State support with \$1 in State funding up to \$100 million.

The money is to be used principally to equip the facility with state-of-the-art high-tech instrumentation, and for graduate fellowships to attract the best students worldwide to advance nanoscience and nanotechnology research, to aid high-tech American businesses.

"Innovation in American industry has been intimately connected to discoveries in basic science," points out David Awschalom, director of the Center for Spintronics and Quantum Information Processing, University of California, Santa Barbara. "With the disappearance of basic science research in industrial laboratories, the US government is concerned about the source of future innovation. So the new center is an experiment to back a group of universities to do fundamental science and work with industry, to keep them informed of the latest developments."

Analysts' Take:

Jiang Lei, senior researcher for the application of nanotechnology, Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Nano, together with IT and biology, are the three major technologies that will play important roles in the 21st century.

Nanotechnology can be used in the manufacture of daily products, from clothes, houses, vehicles to medicines, medical tools and equipment, telecom products and information storage products, by improving the quality of the products we are using today and developing new ones.

Nanotechnologies can bring a "revolution" in materials used by industries such as textiles, construction materials, chemicals, petroleum, auto, military facilities and telecommunication.

The development of nano products can also stimulate the prosperity of other industries such as manufacturing equipment and machines, new quality standards

and measurements, and so on.

At the government level, nanotechnologies can be used in military industry, including new arms development and information transmission, space industry, nanobiology and nanopharmacies.

The commercial use of nanotechnologies can promote the overall progress of a nation, its economy and competitiveness; strengthen its defense capability and social security.

In China, more than 50 universities and 21 independent research institutes are involved in research in this field. Led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, Beijing University and Fudan University, most of the research institutions are concentrated in Beijing and Shanghai.

Meanwhile, 323 corporations, most located in the three industrial belts of Beijing-Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou, are producing nano related products. 15 percent are products for industrial uses and 85 percent for civilian uses.

For 2003, Media Sector Fomenting Rebellion

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 30 (Los Angeles Times) - Many media pundits predict that next year will be a time for rebuilding. But just as surely, it will be a time for rebelling.

Granted, tremendous turmoil in the media sector this year is likely to lead to a search for stability in 2003, as leading media companies such as AOL Time Warner Inc., Vivendi Universal and Walt Disney Co. focus intently on recovery rather than rapid expansion through acquisitions.

Indeed, for most media executives, cost cutting will be the order of the day as they hunker down amid a still-lethargic economy and continued accounting probes in pockets of the industry.

Yet that doesn't mean there won't be plenty of battling between media giants, as well as within them. Among the expected developments: Cable companies will revolt against their program suppliers over pricing, and at least a couple of top executives will face mutinies within their own ranks.

(Sallie Hofmeister)

Analysts' Take:

Yu Guoming, vice president, Institute of Journalism, Renmin University of China

In the last few years, the world media industry, represented by the US media, focused on large scale expansions. It is understandable: size means success, particularly in a sophisticated market with fierce competition.

Models for profiting in the unique media industry are quite simple: to have what the others don't; and to have better and cheaper ones than the others.

Of the three models, the third one can provide an answer to the size expansion in the US media industry last year. Only with a large enough size, can you achieve reasonable efficiency, both in media products and market sales.

But contents are the fundamental elements, the soul, of the media industry, its products, and its success. It's the same basic requirement as print, audio and visual, and online media. The picture is like the construction of highways. No matter how long or what quality the highways are, there should be vehicles using them. Otherwise, it's all meaningless.

The expansion of media enterprises also has its disadvantages and risks. It needs highly skilled and sophisticated management expertise. A death of a part of the large group can bring the whole empire crashing down. The failures of media groups like French Vivendi and Germany's Kirch have provided examples in this regard.

It is an inevitable tendency that media enterprises are advancing towards being larger. It's right. But don't forget you need to be strong enough in your fundamental business before any expansion. Strength means a higher quality of your contents in the media industry.

It is fortunate that the US media industry has finally realized the formula for their success, even though coming after so many restructurings, as well as up and downs in 2002.



Clerks in the Eurodollar pit at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange signal prices during the final minutes of trading December 31, 2002. The exchange celebrated its third consecutive year of record-breaking volume in a year which saw the business world marred by accounting scandals, a lackluster economy, paltry corporate profits and steep declines in stock prices.

Reuters Photo

Citibank to Invest in China's Pudong Bank

SHANGHAI, Dec. 31 (Reuters) - Citibank, a unit of US financial giant Citigroup, plans to buy a strategic 8.26 percent stake in Shanghai Pudong Development Bank in its first banking investment in the potentially massive China market.

Pudong Bank president Jin Yun said on Tuesday China's central bank had given approval on Monday to Citibank to become a strategic investor in the medium-sized, Shanghai-based lender.

Many foreign banks are looking at acquisitions in China, hoping a strategic partnership with a local bank would help them tap the country's \$1 trillion in personal savings.

Last year, HSBC bought eight

percent of the small Bank of Shanghai. Private US equity fund Newbridge Capital Group is planning to acquire nearly 20 percent of Shenzhen Development Bank.

Analysts said Pudong Bank's main attraction was a steady profitability record in recent years and growing branch network headquartered in Shanghai.

Shares in Pudong Bank, one of China's four listed lenders, fell 4.03 percent to 9.28 yuan today, as domestic investors took no cheer from the long-expected Citibank news, focusing instead on the new share issue diluting capital, brokers said.

Pudong Bank said its additional share issue would raise up

to three billion yuan (\$362 million), down from an earlier target of five billion.

Lin Wei, banking analyst at Capital International Holdings, said Citibank could help Pudong Bank develop its credit card business, a nascent but rapidly growing market in China, as well as help with risk management and Internet banking.

Many Chinese banks, laden with bad debt or too small to compete effectively, are in talks with giant foreign competitors, hoping to clinch partnerships before China opens the shuttered sector more widely under its WTO commitments.

(Tiffany Wu, with additional reporting by Lee Chyen Yee)

Rehnquist: More Bankruptcy Judges Needed

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1 (Reuters) - The US Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist said on Wednesday that the Congress needs to name more bankruptcy judges in the wake of the sharp increase in the number of bankruptcy filings.

William H. Rehnquist
AP Photo

In his 2002 Year-End Report on the Federal Judiciary, Rehnquist said no new bankruptcy judges had been created since 1992 although the number of cases filed has increased by more than 570,000 since then.

Rehnquist said the number of filings in bankruptcy courts grew 8 percent in the year to an all-time high of 1,547,669 cases filed. Bankruptcy filings have risen 72.5 percent since 1993.

ECB Chief Says Willing to Stay on Longer

BERLIN, Dec. 29 (Reuters) - European Central Bank president Wim Duisenberg said he was willing to extend his stay in office if necessary until a successor was found, although he did not think this would be the case.

French central bank head Jean-Claude Trichet remains the frontrunner to replace Duisenberg, but Trichet's ongoing trial related to a bank scandal in France might force European Union leaders to appoint someone else.

Wim Duisenberg
Reuters Photo

General Electric Faces First Strike in 30 Years

NEW YORK, Jan. 1 (FT.com) - Many of General Electric's US plants could be crippled as the world's biggest industrial company faces its first strike in 30 years.

The strike alert, which could herald a tough year ahead for GE on the industrial relations front, was triggered on Wednesday when an average rise of about \$200 a year in the amount employees and retirees must pay to the company's managed healthcare plan took effect. The increase raises each worker's contribution towards healthcare to about \$700 a year.

GE raised employees' contributions because the cost of its managed care plan had risen by about 45 per cent over three years, reaching \$1.4bn in 2002.

(Vincent Boland)

Pepsi Loses Appeal Against Coke

NEW YORK, Dec. 30 (Reuters) - PepsiCo Inc. lost an appeal in a four-year-old suit against its rival Coca-Cola Co.

Pepsi, the No. 2 beverage producer, argued in a 1998 suit that No. 1 producer Coca-Cola violated antitrust laws by barring food distributors that sold its fountain drinks from selling any Pepsi beverages. Pepsi had argued that Coca-Cola was illegally monopolizing the market.

US District Judge Loretta Preska dismissed the suit in September 2000 saying Pepsi failed to present enough evidence in support of its claims to warrant a trial.

A US Appeals panel affirmed Preska's ruling in a Tuesday decision.

Kodak Combating Digital Appeal

Dec. 27 (Washington Post) - Eastman Kodak Co., the world's largest maker of photographic film, launched a public relations blitz designed to keep the film manufacturer from becoming a technology casualty of the early 21st century - or at least to stave off what may be inevitable.

The company greets the idea that digital cameras might replace film with enthusiasm. Kodak, however, argues that there are things film can do that digital video cannot. Film can store more than twice as much visual data - more color, more grain, more tone - than digital video.

(Frank Ahrens)

Many Chinese banks, laden with bad debt or too small to compete effectively, are in talks with giant foreign competitors, hoping to clinch partnerships before China opens the shuttered sector more widely under its WTO commitments.

Famous director Steven Soderbergh used traditional film to shoot some of his movie "Full Frontal," but most of it was recorded with a digital camcorder.

Photo by Bob Marshak

AP Photo

Another Ming Brick in the Wall



Ming bricks on the demolished swimming pool at Beijing Normal University

Photo by Cao Boyuan

By Chen Ying

Thousands of ancient bricks are being recalled to reconstruct the Ming Dynasty City Wall.

Beijing Normal University recently began to demolish its old outside swimming pool, removing many of the ancient bricks from the pool's body and foundation. The bricks' noble origin is described in the memoirs of Xu Jialu, an alumnus of the university and now a famous linguist.

According to Xu, the university built the pool in 1958. At that time the government was also organiz-

ing the demolition of the ancient city wall, built during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, then located at the present Second Ring Road, deemed disadvantageous to city planning.

To save money, students were elected to transport the dismantled bricks from Huokou, now an intersection along the Second Ring Road. The bricks were so heavy that girls could only carry one at a time, while boys could only carry one and a half, Xu recalls.

Beijing Youth Daily reported on December 29 that these bricks seemed to be made during the Ming Dy-

nasty, because the city wall of the Yuan Dynasty was made from earth smashed tightly above the stumps, which were buried underground.

The government is currently building a Heritage Park for the Ming Dynasty City Wall in Chongwenmen. Unfortunately, only one third of the project has so far been completed, because it lacks the original Ming bricks. Aware of the issue, Beijing Normal University decided to contribute its own bricks to the park.

Meanwhile, a large quantity of Ming city wall bricks

have also been found at the No.1 Factory of Coal Company near Qingnian Road in Chaoyang District. The factory also used the demolished Ming bricks to set up a section of railway foundation about 1,000 meters long and three meters high during 1960s, but the factory will soon move out of the urban district, and the railway foundation will be demolished.

"We've contacted government administration. We'll contribute our bricks to the cultural relic department as soon as they are removed," said a factory spokesman surnamed Zhou.

Mainstream Meets Minority

By Xiao Rong

Renowned vocalist Guo Song never expected the folk song that promoted him to nationwide household name status to also condemn him as a violator of folk art copyrights.

Last Saturday, Guo Song and China Central Television were ruled to publicly announce that the *Wusuli Boatman's Song*, which Guo has been performing for over 40 years, was adapted from folk melodies of northeast China's Hezhen minority nationality.

The case opened with a heated debate last April, when Guo was charged by the Hezhen township government in Heilongjiang Province for infringing copyright of the traditional Hezhen *Boatman's Song* by claiming authorship as the composer.

In *Beijing Today's* front-page report of the lawsuit ("Folk Artists Ensnared in Copyright Cases") on June 14, Guo Song expressed his confidence in winning the case

for his innovation in adapting the original folk tune.

However, based on professional verification by the China Music Works Copyright Association, Beijing No.2 Intermediate People's Court ruled that the *Wusuli Boatman's Song* was an adaptation of *Missing the Lover*, another Hezhen minority folk melody.

Legal experts have commented that Guo's case is a typical folk artwork copyright dispute in China. The final judgment may set a precedent for future legislation on the protection of folk art copyrights.

"Due to the lack of specific regulations regarding folk artwork protection, it's difficult for judges to settle the increasing number of folk art copyright disputes in recent years," said Wang Fanwu, chief judge of Guo's case.

Wang appealed for a balance between the protection and evolution of folk arts, calling for the active revitalization of China's folk art resources.

Beijing Women Keep House Best

By Sun Ming

No more is housekeeping reserved for poor migrant workers from the countryside, as more and more high and haughty Beijing women are now taking over the job.

Last Thursday, 508 female Beijingers (a.k.a. aspiring housekeepers) signed draft contracts with their future employers at a meeting held by the Beijing Community Service Center (BCSC).

"We really didn't expect so many local women to apply as housekeepers," said Wang Xuan, BCSC staff member. "Right now Beijing just needs more housekeepers," he concludes, as next month many regularly employed house servants will leave the capital to celebrate Spring Festival in their hometowns.

In the past, finding a local housekeeper was no easy task. Beijingers tended to cling to their traditionally noble status as residents of China's historical capital, and were rarely seen in housekeeping aprons.

"But modern Beijing women are opening their minds and changing their economic situations," said Wang.

Liu Cuixia, 44, a housekeeper who cares for a newborn baby, told *Beijing Today* that she is quite satisfied with her current job. "I can make 600 yuan month, which is better than before," she said.

Beijing residents are officially entitled to 250 yuan per month in unemployment benefits. Liu lost her full-time job as a waitress

eight years ago, and after trying out various outfits as a snack vendor and a part-time hospital worker in the critical care ward, she finally decided to become a housekeeper in 2000. She says housekeeping is by far the most fun.

Beijing employers also welcome Beijing housekeepers. Zhang Xiaoyan, a civil servant from the Ministry of Health, called BCSC to find a Beijing housekeeper two weeks before she gave birth to her son last month. She followed the example of several of her co-workers who had also employed local housekeepers.

"We believe it's much safer to hire Beijingers as housekeepers," said Zhang. "It's much easier to find out their background and where they live."

Zhang also appreciates the fact that her housekeeper lives just nearby, so doesn't need to be accommodated, unlike most migrant employees.

However, BCSC says that there is still a high demand for housekeeping Beijingers, many of whom are still preoccupied with saving face in front of their relatives.

"I don't tell my own family what I do," admits Liu Yanzhen, a 42-year-old housekeeper. "My own social standards may have evolved, but the shame of housekeeping is still a die-hard conventional idea among most Beijingers."

Only her husband knows her undercover identity, Liu confides.

Fair Welcomes Foreign Concubines

By Sun Ming

Fair and foreign young ladies are invited to audition for a cameo role as a concubine in next month's Spring Festival performances.

Every year for the past six years, the classical play *Yuanfeixingqin* (元妃省亲), literally the *Royal Concubine Visits Home*, has been performed in the Beijing Grand View Garden (北京大观园) at Honglou Temple Fair (红楼庙会) during Spring Festival, but this is the first year foreign actresses will star in the festive performances.

Royal concubine Yuan is a figure of one of China's four classic novels, *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The

Beijing Grand View Garden, opened in 1986, was designed to reproduce the garden in the novel.

Yuan's starring role consists of sitting in the sedan chair carried by eight men and protected by one hundred Royal Guards.

Temple Fair announced that all foreign women aged 15 to 35 are welcome to audition for the part. Six lucky ladies will be chosen to play Yuan for each of the six days of the performance.

Temple fair is a traditional Spring Festival activity, with a variety of entertainment including folk art drum and puppet performance, as well as a taste of old Beijing snacks.



By Sun Ming

12,000 English-learning fans rallied at Beijing Workers' Gymnasium to shout "Crazy English" on the first day of the new year.

Li Yang, 34, packed audiences into the stadium to repeat English after him in the corporate-sponsored activity.

Li has become a celebrity in China after developing "Crazy English," a teaching method which involves students shouting English phrases at the top of their lungs.

"I can make it!" "Just do it!" All kinds of people from all kinds of

Jest & Shout

Photo by Jackey

fields, including students, white-collar workers and retirees, shouted after Li while histrionically gesturing their emotion.

Crazy English is an unconventional method of English learning that encourages learners to enunciate the language as they study, breaking with previous methods widespread in China heavily focused on reading, writing and grammar.

"His method of just speaking out helps rid us of our shyness when talking to foreigners," affirmed Li Wen, a student from the Beijing Technology Institute.

"Cambridge" Prep Courses Fail the Test

By Sun Ming

Nearly one-fourth of preparation courses for the highly esteemed Cambridge Youth Learners English Test (CYLET) were shut down last month in Beijing.

Since CYLET first came to China in 1997, its growing popularity has led to an outburst of preparation courses all over the country, and especially in Beijing. However amidst this booming new business, not all of these courses were opened with the honest intention of educating the nation.

Beijing Education Examinations Authority (BEEA) surveyed all 254 organizations which had opened CYLET preparation courses in the city within the past two months. Out of these, 56 were subsequently asked to close due to poor teaching conditions and qualifications.

Hosted by the prestigious University of Cambridge, CYLET tests the ability of children aged 6 to 12 years to use English in their daily lives. Although the exam is not compulsory, many top middle schools prefer students who have successfully passed the CYLET. Not surprisingly then, preparation courses are highly valued by Beijing parents.

"But this time, the classes we shut down had absolutely no guarantee of quality at all," said Sun Xiuqun, deputy director of BEEA. BEEA requires that the teachers hold an English Bachelor degree, and be specially trained by experts from BEEA. Each organization should also have at least 600 students.

"Unqualified organizations only had an average of 30 students. They rent a couple of classrooms in primary schools

also wanting to cash in on the trend," said Sun.

Each preparation course is usually a one-year program charging up to 3,000 yuan in tuition per student.

"They aren't even ashamed to cheat kids out of their education!" indignates Li Qingzhu, mother of a fourth-grader. Li's daughter Ming Fei is eager to take the CYLET, along with most of her classmates next year. "Good thing I didn't send her to one of those scams," said Li.

Zhang Siqui, president of the officially qualified Siqui Training School, said that most parents have no idea about CYLET. "They don't even know English, let alone how to choose a good preparation course for their child."

Now more than ever, Chinese are forking out to learn English, spending some 10 billion yuan every year in the English education market in China. *Beijing Youth Daily* reports that over 25,000 children will take the next CYLET this March 22. A total of 37,000 students took the CYLET last year in March and September, representing a 30 percent increase over 2001.



Underhand shot of unqualified preparation course at the Beijing Anzhongli Primary School

150,000 Yuan Embezzled

By Sun Ming

A lovesick accountant was caught with 150,000 embezzled yuan at Beijing West Railway Station last Friday, just as he was about to jump on his connecting train.

Yang Liwei, 32, from the countryside of Heilongjiang Province, intended to give the money to his lover in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, before committing suicide there. Yang had been emotionally divided between his wife and his lover for the past five years, police said.

"I couldn't bear the situation any more. But I wanted to repent by offering them both an apologetic sum of money before leaving this world," Yang told the police.

Yang fell in love with Xia Li (pseudonym) who had lived in his village since 1997. Xia divorced in order to marry Yang, who was also married. But because Yang was also the father of a four-year-old boy, he could never bring himself to divorce.

"The money was supposed to be the wages and bonuses for 280 teachers in my hometown," Yang said. "Then I withdrew an extra 20,000 yuan in cash from the treasury department of my county on Dec. 24." Yang was the accountant of the Educational Office of Tianshan County.

Yang left 50,000 yuan at home to make up for his adulterous life, and without telling his wife, left for Beijing on Dec. 27.

"I planed to go to my girlfriend's university in Lanzhou, see her one last time and give her the rest of the money," confessed Yang.

Li Zhongxiang, the policeman on patrol at the railway station, noticed a very nervous-looking Yang whose ID card and work certificate revealed different names.

Li then searched Yang's luggage and found two bottles of poison and a dagger. Yang believed he would guarantee himself a successful suicide using both methods, Li said.



Taxi driver Zhang Naibo refuses 150,000 yuan.

Photo by Mily

150,000 Yuan Refused

By Sun Ming

One careless passenger has one honest taxi driver to thank - for a 150,000 yuan (\$18,000) cash return - no receipt required.

It was a big day last Thursday for Feng Yong, 31, owner of a small beauty salon in Beijing, as he took a taxi to a real estate property to pay for his new apartment. To avoid attracting attention, the home-buyer carried the full cash amount in a common plastic bag.

"It may not look that way, but I'm really a very cautious person," Feng told *Beijing Today*. He had purposely invited his uncle along to videotape the entire process of signing the contract with his realty developer.

Feng sat in the front of the taxi, while his wife and uncle sat in back. They all got out at the "Sunlight New Lines (阳光干线)" residence in Yayuncun. The plastic bag containing 150,000 yuan, however, remained on the front seat.

It was not long before Zhang Naibo, 45, driver of the taxi, noticed the black plastic bag, as well as the many paper money bills peeping through its holes.

"Actually, the first thing that popped into my mind was that those passengers must be really worried," Zhang told *Beijing Today*. "So I immediately turned back."

It was a good thing he did.

Feng and his wife and uncle were sitting around the table, obviously waiting for the realty developer, twiddling their thumbs, when Zhang rushed into the lobby, shouting "Whose plastic bag?"

Only then was Feng struck by the obvious.

"As soon as I saw my plastic bag in his hand, I jumped up and grabbed it from him," said the absent-minded client. "I shudder to think what would have happened if I hadn't taken Zhang's taxi."

Not five minutes had passed between the time Feng had walked away from his cash and the time it was back in his hands. He knew that if it weren't for Zhang's heart of gold, he would never have seen his money again. "I didn't ask for a receipt. And there are 60,000 taxis in Beijing."

Zhang refused to receive one cent in compensation, instead accepting a handwritten thank-you note from Feng.

"I was quite startled when I learned that the plastic bag contained 150,000 yuan in cash, but I don't regret my action at all," said Zhang, who only earns 1,500 yuan per month. His wife, Li Lan, who had just lost her job, received 300 yuan per month for unemployment.

"My wife praised me after I told her the story," Zhang beams.

Art Lovers — or Just

Voyeurs?

New rule in Xi'an outlaws body-painting shows

By Lily Li

A popular event held during last year's World Cup featured international model Rebecca Romijn-Stamos wearing the designs of New Zealand artist Joanne Geyer. At first glimpse, the model appeared to be dressed in a colorful shirt, but on second glance, onlookers realized that in fact she was naked.

The event was not without precedent in the mainland. Body-painting had its maiden show in China in May last year in Wuhan. Up to now, ten similar shows have been held in Guangzhou, Shenyang and Beijing, said www.163.com. But Xi'an is the first city to impose an outright ban.

Naked that is, except for a

covering of paint. The art of body-painting has excited much interest recently. Instead of a canvas, artists use spray guns and a person's body. Popular in western countries, in China it has not been welcomed with open arms.

On December 24, the Department of Culture and the Department of Public Security in Xi'an established a new rule banning the organization or performance of any body-painting events, except for sanctioned professional photographic activities as of November 26, *Xi'an Huashang* newspaper reported.

The rule stipulates that performances of striptease, lady boys and performance art with violent or erotic content should be forbidden. All the organizers, impresarios and actors involved will be judged as criminals.

It was made after a modelling event took place outside Shaanxi Provincial Gymnasium on November 26, to publicize a local

clothing company. A masked female, naked apart from a bikini bottom, showed off the flower design painted on her upper body to the astonished crowds. The show became the subject of many a heated discussion in the city in the following days.

However, Hengyang city, Hunan Province was the first place to actually arrest models for taking part in a show, stating that "body-painting shows are obscene activities." Mr. Zhao, who declined to reveal his full name, told a *Xiaoxiang Morning Post* reporter that he was waiting for the show to begin along with 500 other eager audience members at the Heaven and World Plaza on September 13. Suddenly, local police rushed in, and arrested the two models, later taking them to a detention center.

The designer at the show protested the arrest, saying the art of body-painting is an legitimate art-form. The audience watching was very quiet and respectful, so it was wrong for the police to disturb the shows. Mr. Zhao



Crowds look on in amazement, Shaanxi Province Gymnasium, November 26.

Photo by Cai Jingrui

also admitted, "it was the quietest moment of the evening."

Hengyang Police said that such shows should only be held in places like art galleries. These activities held in entertainment venues are just inferior and dirty methods for the organizers to attract more guests and get more benefits, and should be viewed as obscene performances.

How should we define body painting? Is it an art-form or merely obscene? Is it right for Xi'an to make such rules and for Hengyang Police to arrest models? Opinions follow:

Liu Feng, employee in Longzhi Culture Propagation Developing Company

People shouldn't take the issue too seriously, it's just a kind of art. Designs on the body can give us a new and different world of pictures, can't they?

But at the same time, I don't think it's wrong for Xi'an to make the rules and for policemen to enact them because these deeds are all related to the practicality

of their locale. People's level of enjoying art in certain places cannot reach so high, and many view this art as having an erotic content. I can understand why they forbid such activities.

Some art-forms have become tools for entertainment, which certainly could lead to damages in society's healthy environment. Under the banner of art, destroying people's sense of beauty is also a kind of cheating.

Vincent Ho, Hong Kong body painter

Body-painting, which seems quite the vogue, in fact existed from ancient times when our ancestors wore nothing, with only pictures on their bodies as decoration. I view it as a tradition as long as there have been naked bodies.

In China, there is also a wonderful body-painting art — facial makeup in operas, and it's the pinnacle of all the body arts.

Based on such a long history, body-painting is anything but a dirty and unhealthy activity.

I can't tell who are interested in the beautiful pictures on the body and who are only watching the body with the beautiful pictures, and I think only the audiences can give the answer. But undoubtedly, it gives an opportunity for the audiences to be shocked.

We seldom touch the model's bodies during the drawing process, and the models don't just show their private parts which are usually covered by interesting pictures and colors, so I don't think this art should be forbidden. On the contrary, we should encourage public interest in it.

Zhu Dazhi, writer for www.people.com

I think body-painting shows, like fashion shows can be used for business purposes. And there is no legal basis for Hengyang police to stop the performance of it.

Even if the performance is illegal, the people who are arrested first should be the organizers and painter, not the models. A detention center in the Public Security Bureau is a place for prostitutes, and it's illegal and unfair to make the models stay with these girls.

What's more, whether the show is legal belongs to the remit of the Culture Bureau instead of the Public Security Bureau.

Anyway, it's a question of art, not of eroticism.

Fan Di'an, Vice Dean, Central Art College

To some extent, we can judge what the public's perception of beauty is from such discussions.

But nowadays body-painting shows in our country, I dare say, are not the true ones but business activities, using art as a camouflage. The aim of such shows is not to enhance people's taste of beauty but to tempt the audiences.

What I really mean is a real artist wouldn't produce such works. And the people who produce body-painting works for business shows are not good artists, to say nothing of being excellent ones. They don't exhibit the bodies from an artistic standpoint.

By Chen Ying

Zhang Yang (pseudonym), a lawyer in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, sued a local cinema and a movie production company because the cinema screened four minutes of advertisements before showing the main program *Hero*, the latest hit movie by director Zhang Yimou.

Zhang Yang went to Zhejiang Cuiyuan Movie World, to watch the movie on December 23. According to the ticket, the movie was due to commence at 21:30. But Zhang and the other patrons had to watch about four minutes of commercials before it began at 21:34. But Zhang was not happy to wait. He thought paying customers were there to appreciate a movie, not to be forced to watch advertisements, whether they liked it or not.

Three companies — Beijing New Picture Distribution Co., Eldo International Group and Elite Entertainment Company, which produced the movie, had attached the advertisements to the movie.

Zhang sued the cinema and Beijing New Picture Distribution in Xihu District People's Court in Hangzhou December 25, demanding the cinema should stop playing the advertisements and refund the ticket cost of 40 yuan, plus another 40 yuan as compensation. Zhang also wanted the distribution company to cut the commercials from movie copies.

Zhang Yang's action surprised the media. It may be the first time an individual has put such an appeal before the Chinese court. No matter what the outcome is, there may have to be some changes in operating and managing advertisements in China's movie industry. Will it be better or worse? We'll have to wait.

No Hero Worship

Lawyer sues cinema and movie-company for unexpected advertisements



Patrons leaving Dizhi Cinema, December 20.

Photo by Lily

The agent thought:

Beijing New Picture Distribution entrusted Beijing Sino-Film Montage Advertisement Company to deal with the advertising on *Hero*'s behalf. Guan Yingshi, the manager and spokesman for the company answered *Beijing Today*'s questions about the case.

Beijing Today: How long have China's cinemas screened commercials before the movie?

Guan: As far as I know, some cinemas began to play some advertisements or trailers at the beginning of 1980s. This is very common in Western countries. The China Film Group even issued a document allowing cinemas to show some advertisements several years ago. The group will publish a movie advertisement management regulation next year.

Beijing Today: What do you think about the lawyer's appeal?

Guan: Have you ever watched a TV play on some cable TV stations? It often happens that you have to wait several minutes in front of the TV. Although you thought you sat down on time, the station transmitted many advertisements before the program. I think it's the same for the movie industry.

Beijing New Picture Distribution owned the copyright of *Hero* and advertisement is a kind of by-product. As an industry, each movie company wants to benefit from its production. It's reasonable to put some advertisement along with the movie if you have the production company's permission.

I'm a little bit surprised about the lawyer's behavior. But the court will give a reasonable judgment in accordance with the laws and regulations.

Experts' Opinions:

Zheng Chengliang, the president of the National Judges College

The length of advertisements is the key to whether the court should support the plaintiff in this case. The audience would feel they were cheated if the screening time of the advertisements was too long. Then the court would think about the audience's loss caused by the long advertisements and force the cinema to compensate. It may be improper that the audience sued the cinema if the cinema only screens commercials for several minutes before a movie. Then the court shouldn't support the request for compensation.

It's very common now to see advertisements in the cinemas in China. It can be seen to have broken the contract if the movie doesn't screen on time from the view of civil law.

Liu Zhihui, associate professor, China University of Political Science and Law

The theater-going public has made a contract with the cinema after buying the ticket. The time printed on the ticket is the screening time according to the contract agreement. So the cinema should play the movie on time.

In this case, the actual screening time was four minutes later than the time printed on the tickets. The cinema actually broke the contract with the audience. The cinema should take the responsibility for breaking the contract. Personally, I think the compensation for the loss caused by such a delay should be equal to the benefit that the cinema got through screening the advertisements. The plaintiff in this case should get support from the court.

Background

As the most popular movie nationwide this winter, *Hero* has already broken records in the domestic market. In an article published on January 1, *Nanfang (Southern) Daily* said the domestic box office takings had surpassed 130 million yuan. Zhang Weiping, one of the producers, said he thought the film would earn "more than 200 million yuan around the country."

Despite its box office success, *Hero* was the most expensive Chinese movie ever made. *Sanlian Life Week* put the movie's production costs at US\$31 million, not including marketing and promotion. "Investors may have to wait at least a year to see a return on their investment," said Zhang Zhenyan, another producer of the movie.

In order to minimize potential losses, the distribution company agreed to screen adverts along with the movie.

Internet surfer, from 62.252.224.*

The cinema would show twenty minutes of advertisements before screening a movie in Britain when I lived there. And the start time printed on the tickets indicates the time of showing the advertisements. Whether the advertisements shown before a movie belongs to the movie is the key to the case. As the media said, the companies who want to put their commercials along with *Hero* got the rights through bidding. Apparently, the advertisements should belong to the movie.

There are only two reasons to explain the lawyer's motivation in my mind — making himself well known and making our country's corresponding laws more sound. I think it should be the latter one. But I now ask myself if there is something wrong with our consumer consciousness, and whether the people are unable to adapt to the more developed free market economy?

SOUND BITES

"So we must first manage things well underfoot. People cannot enjoy other rights if they have no right to travel freely."

— Zhou Mingzhong, a section director in the Communications Bureau, Guizhou Province, after having roamed throughout the province for 36 years, in a quest to link every village to a highway.

"North Korea has been digging deeper into isolation these days, and the United States is pouring hot water into the hole to force it to come out. At this hard time, North Korea increasingly sees that South Korea is its only friend, as it tries to avoid the brunt of U.S. diplomatic pressure."

— Koh Yoo-hwan, a North Korea expert in Seoul's Dongkuk University, regarding North Korea's urging South Korea Wednesday to back its confrontation with the United States over its nuclear program, sensing an opportunity in the recent widespread anti-American sentiment in South Korea

"If at the end of my mandate all Brazilians have the possibility to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner, I will have fulfilled the mission of my life."

— Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's first elected leftist president, taking office Wednesday and pledging to ease the agony of countless impoverished and hungry Brazilians who inhabit South America's biggest country

By Chen Ying

Holding Up Half the Glass Ceiling

By Su Wei

Surveys conducted by the women's association of seven Beijing districts (Dongcheng, Xicheng, Chongwen, Xuanwu, Pinggu, Shunyi and Changping) in December 2002, provide an insight into the situation of female cadres, and the difficulties and problems they face.

Sexual discrimination

The term "sexual discrimination" does not actually appear in any of the surveys, however "influence of traditional ideas" is highlighted as a major problem faced by those surveyed.

"Some senior (male) cadres still have the idea that women are less courageous, resolute, and generous. There is a frequently used expression 'The longer the hair, the narrower the horizon,'" says Liu Fei, a vice head of a state research institute in Xicheng District.

Liu says the influence of "traditional ideas" becomes more obvious in the public selection of government cadres.

"In some areas, all the cadres are male. Some job descriptions even state that only male candidates are acceptable." The survey conducted in Changping District reveals that no new female cadres were appointed in a recent public selection.

Five of the seven surveys conclude that female cadres "are less properly distributed in the relevant positions — the majority work in district and community governments," and suggest that more female cadres be involved in departments such as finance, taxation, economics and business.

"It seems that women are more suited to be subordinates to male heads, even when we have the same educational background," says Wang Weiqing, a vice director in a government department in Xicheng District. "My male colleague and I work together to set and carry out specific planning and supervisory activities. But when there is an opportunity to be promoted, the first consideration is given to him." Wang says when she questioned her superior, also a male, he explained, "We need thorough consideration and to make some balance."

The lack of opportunities to change jobs is another influence of "traditional ideas" revealed by the surveys.

It is hard for women to move to a new area. Once we are appointed to one department, we are certain to stay there for ever," says Li Yuming, vice director of an administrative department in Chongwen District.

Around 31 percent of the surveyed female cadres in Dongcheng, especially vice directors of bureaus, agree that the infrequency of opportunities for them to transfer to different departments, as compared to their male counterparts, results in decreased self-confidence and ambition.

"It is because the ability of female cadres to adjust to a new environment and handle different matters under a variety of conditions is doubted. The standards to assess female cadres are higher than those for males," claims Xu Feng, director of a women's association branch. "However, no one is born suitable for a particular position," she adds.

Xu says it is hard to understand the rationale that "requires people to have a variety of experience but deprives some of the right to gain such experience."

In the survey conducted by the Chongwen women's association, female cadres were more vociferous in their complaints (up to 50 percent) about their inability to be promoted to top positions, than their counterparts in other districts.

The surveyed female cadres at the Chongwen branch say it is difficult for them to devote themselves to their full time jobs, especially the cadres of community women's associations. "I even cannot say what I am responsible for. I am appointed as the head of a community. But I am always asked to look after environmental protection and the management of the immigrants," says Wang Yang of Chongwen District.

She says she sometimes hears the female cadres referred to as "the housewives." "The only difference in the minds of those who describe us as such is that we are responsible for a much larger family."

Su Ming, a communications head in Xicheng District agrees, complaining that few people treat the female cadres seriously.

"We frequently need to cooperate with other law administration departments. Whenever there is any dispute, no matter how correct we are, we are always the last to be considered," she claims.

She says the female cadres are

In government departments and non-government organizations from the community to the municipal level, women hold around 46 percent of the management positions in Beijing. These female cadres tend to have an average age between 30 and 45, at least a three-year university degree, and a monthly salary between 1,000 and 2,000 yuan.

However, of these 400,000 women, only 16 percent are bureau heads and 24 percent are department heads. The titles of the majority are preceded by "vice-".



always more likely to be accused of being uncooperative in organizing activities.

"We are not a non-governmental organization. We are entitled under law to carry out our work," she points out.

Age is also an area where female cadres are more likely to be discriminated against. "A man in his 30s is more likely to be appointed or promoted than a

woman, with the spurious justification that men are more energetic and mature," says Shang Jie, an office director in a women's association branch.

"But women in their late 40s or early 50s are overlooked because they are 'too old to be appointed or promoted.'

The retirement age of 55 for women — five years earlier than for men, is also widely consid-

ered unfair by female cadres.

Li Qing, a vice factory head in Chongwen District, recalls her vain efforts to promote a female senior engineer in her late 40s.

"I never realized the reflections of the male heads would be so strong. They supported a male nominee, of the same age but less capable. 'He can work till he is 60 years old, and so make a greater contribution, though it will take him one or two years to accumulate experience.' The rationale sounds reasonable, doesn't it?"

Family Factors

All the surveyed female cadres agree with the contention that they may have a greater burden than their male colleagues, as they have to spend more time on housework.

Of the around 50 percent of the surveyed female cadres working 10 or more hours per day, over 80 percent said they spent over two hours a day on housework. Half of these say it is rare for their husbands to give a hand.

Sun Weihua, a director in the Haidian district government, whose husband is a manager in a government department responsible for infrastructure construction and spends almost one third of each year away on business trips, says the housework is always her responsibility. "It is impossible for me to stop him working and I never think about asking him to share the housework when he is back from a trip."

She says it is difficult for her to be not affected by the burden of housework. "As a manager, I have to work hard and maintain a pleasant demeanor, even when sometimes I am concerned with my ill son. I cannot frequently ask for leave. I do not want to leave myself open to criticisms along the line of 'women are easily distracted by non job-related issues."

For those surveyed in rural areas or holding lower positions, many have less confidence in their ability to handle difficult situations, compared to their male colleagues.

"Maybe I think too much about details, so sometimes I cannot make a decision or say who is wrong or right in public," says Chen Fen, a community head in Haidian District.

Yang Hong, responsible for public relations at a women's association branch, says women

themselves often feel inferior and satisfied with their current conditions. "They are afraid of the risks of exposing themselves to competition."

She recalls in public selection of cadres, some of the female department heads share the opinions that even when they were in their 30s, they still prefer not to take part in the competition for position of bureau heads — voicing such sentiments as "I never think about competing for such higher positions. I cannot see I have any advantage over my male colleagues."

Managing to be more capable

All the seven surveys reveal that the female cadres consider they cannot become more capable merely through taking political theory classes. Taking part in a variety of training programs is seen as essential.

"Some of my colleagues are taking economic management and law classes in their spare time," says Wang Jufang, an office director in Xicheng District, who began studying psychology at Beijing Education Institute three months ago at her own expense.

"Through studying psychology, I am learning how to deal with people with different personalities and engage the interest of all the department staff, allowing their full potential to be brought into play in a short time," says Wei Hua, a vice director of a governmental financial institute.

For the female cadres surveyed in Dongcheng District, they see the provision of more training in the areas of ceremony and propriety as a priority. "Some hope to learn how to behave properly and gracefully at a social gathering or during a media interview," says Li Ru, responsible for conducting the survey.

Li Fei contends that the variety of demands facing female leaders is a result of greater competition and an increasing awareness of individuals' capabilities, and suggests that women are facing greater challenges to win senior positions than men. "Men are trying to maintain their power in society," she says, "however there is a trend toward women gaining power, at men's expense."

(Beijing Today has used the pseudonyms for all the interviewed female cadres.)

Photo / Tony Stone

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Tigers – Not for Consumption!

By Ivy Zhang

Pork, mutton, fish, snake and even dog meat can be found at some dinner tables.

But can people really feast on tiger flesh in Sanya, Hainan Province? No, it is nothing more than a rumor, according to China's State Forestry Administration.

In a statement released Monday, the administration declared, "The killing and eating of tigers is forbidden in China."

On Christmas day, Sanya Maitree Concept company took delivery of 100 Bangladesh tigers and 2,000 crocodiles from Thailand, for its Greatest World of Love theme park, scheduled to open this October.

The animals arrived in Sanya on a China Southern Airlines Boeing 737 and were delivered in 55 military trucks to the company's Breeding and Taming Research Center for Tigers and Crocodiles in Tiandu town, about 10 kilometers from Sanya's downtown area.

The same day, the *Jiangnan Times* published a story titled "Sanya Expected to Allow Tigers to be Eaten in Public," which aroused a storm of controversy across the nation.

The report stated that "in the coming few years, Sanya is expected to be the only city in the world in which people can taste tiger meat in public, according to Sanya Municipal Government and Maitree company." It also claimed that visitors might be able to feed tigers and even help tigers to deliver cubs.

The Sanya government, Mai-

tree and the State Forestry Administration immediately denied the claims.

Chi Zengqing, a Thai national and board director of Maitree, told *News Morning Post* that eating tiger meat is "definitely impossible."

Chi says Bangladesh tigers are rare wildlife and protected under Chinese law. "How can we dare to slaughter them and eat their meat in public? One of the important purposes for Thailand to cooperate with Sanya on this project is to protect the Bangladesh tigers. To this end, a special breeding research center has been established."

As for "visitors delivering tiger cubs," Chi clarified that the truth is "visitors will only be allowed to feed tigers and help baby crocodiles hatch from their eggs."

In China, the breeding and taming of wild animals for the purpose of expanding resourc-

es, promoting public awareness and demonstration is permitted. But current state policy bans the eating of tiger meat, says Wang Weisheng, director of the Wild Life Management Department of the State Forestry Administration.

Wang says tigers are a Category One endangered species. "Not only in China but all over the world, eating tiger meat is banned. The trading of tiger products is also banned worldwide," Wang says.

Beijing Today approached Zhuang Zexiong, from the Project Planning Division of the Sanya Tourism Administration, for more information.

Sanya Maitree Concept, registered in September 2001 with capital of 80 million yuan, is a joint venture between the Sanya municipal government, and private businesses in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Thailand.

The local government is re-

sponsible to allocate 31.5 hectares of land and holds a 30 percent equity, while the other three parties are to invest a total of 300 million yuan.

"The company is also applying for 267 hectares of land, 67 for tiger houses and 200 for crocodile pools," Zhuang says.

The Greatest World of Love Park, located in the east of Tianyahaijiao, a popular Sanya tourism site, is scheduled to open on October 1.

The park will house tigers, crocodiles and elephants and offer animal performances as well as Thai folk performances.

So far, the 100 tigers, six elephants and the first 2,000 crocodiles are in place. A further 18,000 crocodiles will arrive in February.

"They plan to breed 300,000 crocodiles in Sanya," Zhuang says. "This is a poverty-alleviation project. Young crocodiles will be given to local farmers to feed. One or two years later, when they have reached maturity, they'll be given back. Each participating household can make 10,000 to 20,000 yuan a year."

Zhuang said the tigers will be used mainly for performances, while the crocodile will be bred in large numbers.

"I heard the Thailand boss say crocodile skins are more valuable than gold," Zhuang says, adding that crocodile meat can be used to make medicine while their skin can be made into purses and bags.

(Sources: CCTV, Xinhua News Agency, *News Morning Post*)



Zhang Xiangsheng, vice board chairman of Maitree Concept, poses for a photo with a tiger cub more than five months old.

Safe and Healthy

By Ivy Zhang

Beijing Today interviewed Willton Liu, a manager of Sanya Maitree Concept. Following is an edited transcript.

Beijing Today: Could you brief us on the Greatest World of Love project?

Liu: The Greatest World of Love is a theme park designed to reflect the interaction between humans and the environment and between humans and animals.

In the park, people can take photos with tiger cubs and brush the teeth of little crocodiles, bathe them, even help them hatch from their eggs. For crocodiles in the wild, only 30 percent can break their shell and get out into the world.

Beijing Today: The tigers are wild. Were they anesthetized for the journey to Hainan?

Liu: These tigers have been raised and trained with high technology. Their wildness is minimized. They are very safe. The animals' wildness is the result of two factors: inheritance and environment.

According to our research, wildness can pass from mother to cub within a very short period after birth. Cubs are not naturally wild when they are born.

As soon as they are born, we separate them from their mothers and use a sow to feed them milk until they can eat themselves. So, they are rather mild and meek.

Beijing Today: How old are the tigers?

Liu: They range from six months to three or four years old.

Beijing Today: How are the tigers now?

Liu: They have settled very well into our research center. They are very safe and healthy. Each tiger eats two to three kilos of chicken

bones and pork. The feed is prepared by trainers from Thailand. There are 10 trainers now. As the animals grow, more trainers will come.

Beijing Today: It has been reported that the tigers are housed in damp and smelly enclosures. Is that true?

Liu: No. Our tiger houses are built in compliance with standards set by China's State Forestry Administration and Thailand Royal Forestry Bureau.

The houses are permanent and will be renovated over time. We can say both the tigers' safety and life come in line with international standards.

The center covers an area of about 27 hectares, including tiger houses and a park. The tigers have good places to take bath, drink and roam around.

Beijing Today: Has the report that the tigers could be eaten had any influence on your project? Are you going to sue the newspaper?

Liu: Some tabloid newspaper reporters might have made up the report. They are lacking in legal sense and have no media ethics.

As a company, we'll retain the right to sue the newspaper, but we don't think it is necessary to pursue their responsibility for two reasons.

First, our importing of animals is strictly in accordance with United Nations and China's Wild Life Protection Law. We just raise and train them. We do not slaughter them. Otherwise, we would be punished by law.

Second, the government and 99.9 percent of the media support us.

Beijing Today: To raise tigers is costly. Some estimate that each tiger can eat five kilos of meat every day. The feed for one tiger would cost 20,000 yuan every year. How do you cover this expense?

Liu: The crocodiles will be developed as an industry by our company.

Based on more than 10 years medical research, specialists from Thailand have found that crocodiles' eyes and livers, in combination with Chinese traditional medicine, are an effective cure for lung cancer and leukemia.

Development of this business is promising, and will easily cover the cost of raising the tigers.

Law Modified to Protect Animals

China's Wild Life Protection Law and Management Regulations on Laboratory Animal are in the process of modification and review. When the new rules will be implemented is still uncertain, according to the Regulatory Department of State Forestry Administration.

Some articles to be added to the Wild Life Protection Law promulgated in 1988 are expected to reflect the idea of animal welfare and punish those who hunt wild life or destroy the environment.

In recent years, there have been several highly publicized incidents of animals being maltreated, resulting in an increasing awareness of the need for better legislation to protect animals.

Professor Song Wei, a legal expert in the animal welfare field, defines maltreatment as the unnecessary suffering imposed by humans on animals.

"To allow animals to live in a healthy and non-suffering or less-suffering status is the starting point of animal welfare," says Song.

The Wild Life Protection Law clarified the legal position of wild life in China and this law does play a great role in wild life protection. But what about other animals?

"Animals used for working, economic, experimental and entertainment purposes do not enjoy legal protection in our nation," says Song. He expresses the hope that related laws can be passed, the sooner the better. But they must go through a process including legislative research and consideration on execution and punishment.

Edited by Ivy Zhang



Fire vehicles rush to the site.

Photo by Shi Yibo

Gas Explosion Rocks Apartment Building

By Su Wei

An explosion last Saturday in an 18-floor residential and commercial building in Changchun, Jilin Province has left three people dead, dozens injured and at least 20 residents homeless.

"At 4 pm, ten minutes after I arrived home, I heard a frightening 'boom.' Pieces of wall, glass and window frames were flying everywhere," said a Mr. Chen, a 60-year-old resident whose full name was not revealed by the local media.

Chen, who lives on the tenth floor of the building in the Noble Garden community, said, "Seeing a crack appear in one of my walls, I rushed into the corridor to find that the door of the lift had blown out and was lying by the stairwell."

The windows of apartments 1202, 1302 and 1402 were shattered and part of the exterior wall of the building collapsed.

Doors to apartments on and above the tenth floor were buckled by the force of the explosion.

The blast also shattered windows of another building 30 meters away and cars parked nearby were damaged by falling debris.

Police arrived on the scene minutes after the explosion, according to local media, and within 10 minutes, six emergency vehicles and 18 medics

cal staff had arrived.

Police cordoned off the building, and firemen and rescue workers reached the twelfth floor at 4:20, around 20 minutes after the blast.

The injured were taken to the nearby China-Japan Union Hospital of Jilin University.

When *Beijing Today* contacted the emergency clinic of the hospital on Tuesday, a doctor on duty, who refused to give his name, said none of the injuries were serious and the 11 people admitted had all been discharged the previous day.

"It is an accident, not a criminal case," a police man of the Public Order Department of the Changchun Public Security Bureau. The officer, who declined to give his name, told *Beijing Today* he was in charge of the investigation into the incident.

"We are certain it was caused by a gas explosion in apartment 1302."

He confirmed that the explosion caused three fatalities.

"They are the residents of apartment 1302. One was a policeman of the Provincial Public Security Bureau, the other two were his mother-in-law and his daughter aged below seven."

"We cannot tell you when the investigation will be completed, but it is likely to take quite some time," said Meng.

Follow Up

Guilty or Not?

By Ivy Zhang / Lisa Lee

Two law enforcement officers in Gansu Province have received prison sentences on charges of failure to prevent a crime.

As reported in *Beijing Today* on December 20, the two officers, Shan Huizhong, former director of Weiyuan County Judicial Bureau, and Yang Haiping, a local police officer, were present when Sun Xiangyu, a four month pregnant primary school teacher was hacked to death by her husband on April 4 this year.

Longxi County People's court found that Yang "failed to take initiative to carry out his duty, which resulted in severe consequences." While Shan "failed to rescue the victim himself and misdirected others when they were about to attempt a rescue, resulting in severe consequences."

The two were sentenced to be detained for six months, with one year's probation.



Don't Cry Out Loud

By Zhao Pu

Jinyu, hurry up, you're next!" whispered an old man, finding Cai Jinyu still casually dressed backstage.

"How long is this act, ten minutes?" she asked.

"Fifteen."

"No problem."

She went on with her makeup. Before getting changed, Cai took out five candleholders from a cabinet and placed them on the dresser. When she re-emerged in her pink costume a few minutes later, her husband Ling Lihao had already lit the candles, all dressed up and ready to go.

But she still had one last step of preparation left in her routine warm-up exercise. She extended her arms, tucked in her neck, bent her waist, folded her legs, and let her body remain in full handstand position for one minute.

Meanwhile outside, the drum of the Beijing Opera performance now on stage beat faster and faster, announcing the act's imminent conclusion.

Next up was the fourth act, Cai's acrobatic performance *Rolling Light*. She walked on stage, calm and confident. Now in her sixteenth year of acrobatics, she was much too experienced for stage fright.

Playing with fire

The daily show at the Laoshes Teahouse in Qianmen is a famous tourist attraction, displaying various traditional Chinese performing arts to tourists from all over the world. Cai and her husband have been presenting their acrobatic show here for the past four years.

Last Friday was no exception. Cai appeared on stage with a glowing candleholder in one hand and a bright smile on her face, preparing to show off the flexibility and balance of the human body.

Cai contorted her body into different poses, never letting go off the flaming candles in her hand. Her husband followed her on stage, offering her a second, a third, a fourth and finally a fifth candleholder, which she balanced successively on her hands, feet and forehead.

As the performer's body moved slowly and gracefully on the table, highlighted by torches of sparkling candles, the audience gasped in admiration as cameras flashed. "It's amaz-



(left) Waiting for the next show backstage
(right) Ling lights the candles as Cai dresses up.



Warm-up exercise before the performance at Laoshes Teahouse



Ling Zhi, their 2-year-old son is a loyal fan of his parents' acrobatic show.
Photos by Wang Wei

dom spoke with the boys," says Cai. In the eyes of extroverted and outspoken Ling, Cai was just a diligent and quiet girl.

Finally, as they entered the China Acrobatics Troupe together in 1995, they fell in love. That year they both turned 20 years old, already a ripe old age in acrobat years.

Encore

Ling never liked acrobatics. Even now, he abhors the profession. If it were not for his wife, he would have left the stage long ago.

Cai loved acrobatics all along. Even now, she lingers on stage at an age long past her time. "I can't leave the stage, I'll stay here as long as I can," she declares.

"We made the same choice, which was right for her, and wrong for me," the husband concludes. Usually, after the age of 20, most acrobats leave the stage or shift to conjuring. Out of the total ten students who entered the acrobatics troupe together in 1986, only Cai and her husband still survive the acrobatic profession.

Cai and Ling married in 1998. The following year, Cai gave birth to their son. She resumed practice right after the operation. "The nurses in the hospital were astonished when they saw me doing sit-ups in bed the second day after the operation," recalls Cai.

Although she tried her best to keep her place on stage, she knew she was no match against the younger acrobats who out-performed her and finally replaced her in the troupe.

So

she conjured up a new and challenging act, performed by no one else in the troupe, in order to maintain her reputation on stage. "You can't teach an old dog new tricks, they said. My friends and colleagues all told me to drop the idea. They all thought I was ridiculous," says Cai. Even her husband — and stage partner — offered her no support.

"But I am someone who pursues my desire, no matter how difficult it is, no matter what others say," she insists. When she demonstrated her new act to the leaders of the troupe, they knew her better.

Now the couple still performs seven days a week, sometimes giving two performances a day. Cai never misses a single performance, even when she is sick. "Acrobatics is the best medicine," she smiles. "The stage is my drug."



Discovering the Kingdom of Chu through Jiuliandun

By Iris Miao/Zong He

After three months of excavation, field-work has nearly concluded on the Jiuliandun Warring States Period (475-221 BC) Tomb in Zongyang, Hubei Province.

Although the two bodies in Tombs No.1 and No.2 have long decayed, their skeletons are well preserved. A pair of embroidered shoes and a cloud-patterned comb were found in Tomb No.2, suggesting the noble origins of the buried, but their social status cannot be confirmed until experts have interpreted the inscribed bamboo slips unearthed along with them.

Ever since last September, the excavation has produced a number of surprises. Over 1,000 articles (sets) have been discovered, among which over 600 pieces from Tomb No.1 and over 500 from Tomb No.2 are now being sent to the Provincial Museum of Hubei in Wuhan, 300 km away from the excavation site, for further cleaning, identification, and research.

Wang Hongxing, on-site

chief conductor and curator of the Provincial Museum of Hubei, lists the many significant aspects of the grand tomb site.

First of all, Jiuliandun Tomb is the largest site discovered in Hubei Province in the past half century. Previous discoveries such as the Baoshan Chu Kingdom Tomb and Zenghou Yi's Tomb are only single tombs, while Jiuliandun consists of two pits with chariots and horses, two tombs with coffins, and relics of tomb garden architecture.

Second, tomb garden ar-

Chariot wheels
Photos by Cheng Min

Bronze huo, a cooking vessel unearthed from Tomb No.1

chitecture was first observed in Chu Kingdom tombs such as this one. Similar architecture has been found in tombs from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-221 BC) to the Warring States Period, and later in the tombs of princes of other kingdoms. Jiuliandun Tomb represents an unprecedented resource for the research of Chu Kingdom burial customs.

Third, the pit of chariots and horses is the largest of its kind ever discovered. Not only are the pieces

in good shape, but it contains the first six horses representative of the chariot system adopted by Chu Kingdom nobles.

Fourth, although Tomb No.1 had once been robbed, it did not suffer a great loss. Meanwhile Tomb No.2 perfectly survived all possible damage, thus preserving a complete set of burial artifacts which provide authentic information on the burial rituals of high ranking Chu Kingdom officials during the Warring States Period.

The fifth significant aspect of the Jiuliandun Tomb excavation is that many of the unearthed articles have never before been seen, such as funerary chariots, a drum with a tiger-shape base and bird stand, and many others whose names and functions have yet to be identified. Among the most important discoveries are: a complete set of wooden ritual articles, the string marks on the se, a zither-like instrument, and two musical reeds. In addition, the more than 1,000 well-preserved bamboo slips unearthed are invaluable.

"The abundant discoveries of the Jiuliandun Tomb provide crucial material for researching the politics, economics, culture, art, religion and many other fields of the period," says Yin Weizhang, senior researcher at the Archaeology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who also participated in the excavation. "It is an important relic of both the Hubei region and the Kingdom of Chu, and it will certainly greatly promote the research of Chu culture."

Beijing Laoshan Lady's Head Portrait Remodeled

By Iris Miao/Zhou Du

The excavation of the Laoshan Han Dynasty tomb in the west of Beijing's Shijingshan District was one of the most sensational archaeological events of the year 2000. However, since the tomb has been emptied of its treasures through successive pillaging over the centuries, much work is now left to research and imagination. Recently, a three-dimensional head portrait reconstructed from the buried female's cranial bones was successfully reproduced at Jinlin University. The head portrait depicts a graceful lady from the Central Plains of China in her 30's.

The restoration was done by the Frontier Archaeology Research Center of Jinlin University. Her flat, long face, relatively high nose and cheekbones, and wide jaw are all typical features of the Central Plains. A report by the Center reveals that her bones also bear traits of Mongolian race, resembling modern Mongolians in East Asia. In other words, she is a representative of the Central Plains race in ancient China, which belongs to the same category as the Han nationality in North China. According to the left thigh-bone and fibula discovered, her height is estimated at about 159.8 centimeters.

Another head sculpture was restored in Beijing one and a half years ago, but because of its deformed skull left uncorrected, the reproduction greatly differed from the original, and it

was not certain that the female originated from the Western Regions of China.

The restoration of the skull took two weeks, says researcher Lin Xuechuan from the Anthropology Room of the Center. Modeling the three-dimensional effect on the computer and matching hair and costume added another two weeks, making the complete head portrait a month-long project. The hairstyle, costume, and pattern on the costume all referred to unearthed relics and frescoes of the Han Dynasty, especially those from the Mawangdui Han Tomb in Changsha, Hunan Province, as the buried female's social status was similar to the one buried in the Mawangdui Tomb, both of whom were nobles.

Lin Xuechuan has been in the business of restoring ancient bones for many years. Previously Russian theories were most popularly adopted, but Lin is a national pioneer in bringing the ancients back to sculptured life using computer-generated 3-D techniques. While traditional model restoration takes about one month, Lin's 3-D techniques can do the job within a week.

Since Jinlin University and Beijing Cultural Relics Research Institute have begun cooperation on the investigation of unearthed bones in Laoshan Tomb, the race analysis and restoration of the head is almost done. Only scientific DNA examination is still under way.



Skull and portrait of Laoshan Lady

Photo by Xu Jiajun

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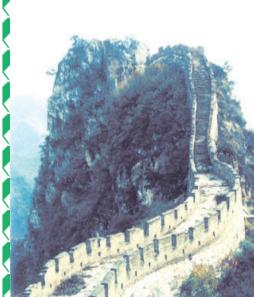
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M



Flowers in bottle by Zhang Guiming

ainstream Artists Seek to Reclaim Space

By Yu Shanshan

Traffic slowed outside the Art Museum of China Millennium Monument last Saturday afternoon, as artists and art lovers milled about.

Fifty prominent Chinese artists, some 30 of who are committed to the traditional style of ink and wash, the remainder oil painters, sculptors and engravers, represented an island of traditionalism in an avant-garde sea. They were there for a seminar, held in conjunction with the exhibition "Spirit of the Century — 50 Chinese Contemporary Artists," to assert their mainstream status within Chinese contemporary arts.

The themes of the seminar, "Creative potential of middle-aged and older artists" and "Development space for traditional painting," succinctly summed up the anxieties of many participants.

"As installation, performance and new media arts prosper, exponents of traditional paper-based arts are inclined to turn from mainstream to marginal genres," stated Zhang Xiaoling, one of the seminar organizers and vice director of the Fine Arts Division of the China Arts Research Institute.

Traditional painting was at the forefront of the arts in China ten years ago. But experimental arts have been steadily gaining in recognition, both from the public and the government, and

critics and the media have become more and more fascinated with those intriguing, sometimes shocking, artistic presentations. The recently opened First Guangzhou Triennial has put experimental art in the spotlight like never before.

"But can experimental arts really stand for Chinese contemporary art? And why is Chinese traditional painting excluded?" asks Zhang.

As artists prepared for this exhibition, they decided to prove that traditional Chinese painting still has a contemporary relevance. Besides some of the big names of Chinese traditional painting like Zhang Ding, Yu Zhixue, Shi Qi, and Ma Zhensheng, participants also included artists who work on canvas, such as Zhou Changjiang.

"They are engaged artists, concerned with what's going on in the world. Their 100 works are the most long-standing ones," said Tao Hong, another exhibition organizer.

The first painting you are likely to see on entering the exhibition is *Huanghua Passway*, by 86-year old Zhang Ding, completed in 1996. Liu Xilin, of the China National Museum of Fine Art, commented during the seminar, "I think it strange to doubt the creativity of older artists, because they never stop keeping up with the age."

These traditional painters are also pragmatic. "Actually, the boundary line between different arts has been broken. Our artists should better pay attention to those new arts, domestic and western," said Fan Di'an, vice dean of Central Academy of Fine Arts, "Competition is good, rivalry is not. It could be a bridge instead of a barrier between different artistic genres. In an increasingly picture-reading environment, we need to find a way to create."

In fact, many "traditional" artists experiment with new techniques. Yu Zhixue has mixed aluminum with water to create his distinctive ice, snow-mountain and water paintings; Zhang Guiming has incorporated the line and color of Miro's paintings into his work to form abstract ink and wash paintings; and Shi Qi had succeeded in combining an abstract-impressionist style with traditional Chinese colors.

However, as Zhang Ding, renowned for his mountain-and-water paintings, said in an interview in July 1999, "the most important thing is that we stand firmly on our soil and have a strong identity as Chinese artists."

As to whether traditional Chinese painting can be described as contemporary Chinese art, the freshest art works of these traditional artists may hold the answer.

New Cultural Identities — International Art Bi- and Triennials in China 2002-2003

The First Beijing International Art Biennale 2003 China

The subject of the first Beijing Biennale is "Innovation: contemporary and regional". Over 40 countries and regions will participate in the Biennale with over 400 influential works of representative artists selected for exhibition. The domestic participants will come from both special invitation and contribution, while the overseas artists are all specially invited. Along with the Biennale, collections of works and documents will be published and an international workshop will be held. Several special exhibitions will be held simultaneously, including the Special Exhibition of Qi Baishi, Special Exhibition of Takayama Tatsuo, Special Fine Art Exhibition of Korea and Century Celebration Exhibition of France Autumn Salon.

Where: China National Museum of Fine Art, Art Museum of the China Millennium Monument

When: September 20 - October 20, 2003

Shanghai Biennale 2002—"Urban Creation"

With the theme "Urban Creation," the fourth Shanghai Biennale intends to set up a stage for discussions on the rapid change of cultural patterns and life styles induced by accelerating urbanization and the new style urban architecture that is transforming the Chinese scene.

Where: Shanghai Museum When: November 22, 2002 - January 20, 2003

The First Guangzhou Triennial—"Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990- 2000)"

The Triennial, which opened November 18, offers a lively and remarkably freewheeling portrait of China's postmodern edges. Over 150 pieces by 135 artists working in paint, sculpture, performance, video, interactive computer and installations are mainly from the 1990's, with some newly commissioned works from that decade's stars.

"Since 1989, China has taken a giant step toward reclaiming a place of world leadership in the contemporary arts," said Wu Hung, general organizer of the Triennial, professor of University of Chicago, at the Triennial opening. "We are experiencing a transformation and trying to show not only how we Chinese artists and western people see ourselves, but who we actually are."

Where: Guangdong Museum of Art

When: till January 19, 2003

xperimental Arts Carry On in Chinese Voice

By Yu Shanshan

While mainstream artists work on carrying on the tradition of traditional Chinese painting, their experimental counterparts are also endeavoring to make a more rational and cautious progress.

The First Guangzhou Triennial — "Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990- 2000)," which opened on November 18, offers a lively and remarkably freewheeling portrait of China's postmodern edges.

The 166 pieces by 135 artists working in paint, sculpture, performance, video, interactive computer and installations are mainly from the 1990's, with some newly commissioned works from several of that decade's stars.

According to Erik Eckholm, the New York Times' Beijing bureau chief, "Walking through the three floors of the show is a multi-sensory experience that leaves the mind tingling because the works are bursting with ideas."

"But in terms of their own country

and experience, many of the pieces fully resonate only if you know a bit of the cultural context," he adds.

A forest of large, socialist-realist statues, heroic workers proudly wielding their tools on the terrace outside the museum's front door is an example. This is a new work by Wang Guanyi, who became successful in the early 1990's with "political pop" art that combined Chinese icons with commercial images like Marlboro and Coke.

"I have rid the works of any obvious cultural antagonism," Wang says in a statement, "instead placing emphasis on the ambiguity that is found in their simple strength."

Other works are more like gentle meditations. A performance and installation *Dialogue with the Peasants of Tiangongsi Village*, by Chen Shaofeng, presents a wall filled with pairs of small oil paintings — Chen's lively portrayals of each villager, and the portrait that each villager painted, in turn, of the bearded Chen.

"I wanted to see the villagers as equal participants in my work," Chen explained. "For most of the villagers, the act of participating made them aware of talent they did not know they had, which was a pleasure in itself."

Along with the Guangzhou Triennial, experimental art exhibitions such as "Synthetic Reality" and "New Media — Student Exhibition" at Beijing's East Modern Art Center, and "Ground Zero Material Art Exhibition" at the Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, have attracted a great deal of attention recently.

"Since 1989, China has taken a giant step toward reclaiming a place of world leadership in the contemporary arts," said Wu Hung, general organizer of the Triennial, professor of University of Chicago, at the Triennial opening. "We are experiencing a transformation and trying to show not only how we Chinese artists and western people see ourselves, but who we actually are."

Where: Guangdong Museum of Art

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Chatting "Around the Fireplace" in Beijing

By Wang Chunzhu

How heart-warming it is to sit around the fireplace chatting with old friends on the eve of the New Year. On December 31, renowned Chinese Taipei singer Lo Tayu offered his fans a warm *Lo Tayu, Around the Fireplace* concert at Capital Stadium.

While Lo Tayu is a bosom friend to children of the 1960s, he represents youth and ideal to today's twenty-somethings born in the 1970s, and is no less a cult symbol to our post-modern teenagers born in the 1980s. This concert was aimed at bridging the generation gaps and reuniting all of Lo's fans to share a common chat "around the fireplace." And judging from the sparks that flew that evening, he must have done something right.

In the global Chinese music circle, Lo Tayu has enjoyed super-star status ever since the release of his first album *Zhi Hu Zhe Ye* in 1982, and his music has profoundly influenced mainland music makers.

Born and raised in Taiwan province, Lo Tayu has a keen interest in Beijing, which to him embodies the essence of culture. "I believe people who really understand and appreciate my music live in the Chinese mainland's most influential cities," he says, "especially in Beijing." Photo by Lu Beifeng

Another Try for Experimental Drama

By Wang Chunzhu

"The nun is only 16 years old / Her hair is shaved by the abbess while she is so young." Many people are already familiar with these classical lines from the traditional Chinese opera *Si Fan-Leaving the Temple Together*.

Ten years ago, the experimental drama *Si Fan* was performed at the Black Box Theatre of the Central Academy of Drama, creating quite a stir in the Chinese drama circles at the time. Ten years later, senior students from the Directing Department of the Central Academy of Drama present their graduation performance *After Si Fan* to audiences in Beijing, beginning this Wednesday at the Central Academy of Drama's Yi Fu Theatre.

The original version of the traditional Chinese opera tells the love story of a young nun and a young monk. The experimental drama *Si Fan* combines this traditional story with the Italian classic novel *The Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio. *After Si Fan*, directed by the associate professor of the Directing Department Ding Ruru, focuses on the adventures of the two eloped lovers in the mundane world, while maintaining the dramatic style of *Si Fan*.

The experimental adventure will end next Friday.



Monks taking a bath. Photo by Wei Tong



Photo Gaffe Hot off the Web

By Jenny Wang

An interphone (circled in red) lies on the ground from a picture of *Hero*, a newly public-shown movie directed by Zhang Yimou.

While this photo is widely spread on the Internet, the producer refused to acknowledge that the picture was officially released and doubted the picture was shot at an unofficial situation or a man-made 3-d picture.

She's No Fool

By Wang Chunzhu

Pop singer Chen Lin has just released her new album, *Don't Want to Fool Myself*, in which she effectively puts a little more of her real self.

Not only was the title song was co-authored by Chen Lin, whose autobiographical lyrics ("Don't want to fool myself / The guy that I love is not you") express her own heartaches and heartthrobs, but as the newly awarded lifelong emissary of the China Environmental Protection Foundation, Chen has written a

new song especially for the environmental protection of China.

Next month, Chen Lin has been invited to sing her new songs for fans in Osaka, Japan, in an international pop music concert with other famous performers including American singer Peabo Bryson and Japanese superstar Minako Hujimoto.

In September, she impressed local audiences in Fukuoka, Japan with her performance at the Asia Arts Festival. This will be the second time in one year for Chen Lin to bear the flag of Chinese pop music to overseas fans.

Infernal Affairs Goes to Berlin

By Jenny Wang

Infernal Affairs will be projected at the 53rd Berlin Film Festival. This is excellent news for directors Andrew Lau and Alan Mak.

"I'm so happy about it," says Andrew Lau, "and I hope making films won't be so difficult once we penetrate the big foreign market."

Presented by Media Asia Films, *Infernal Affairs* tells the story of two men, Ming and Yan, played respectively by Andy Lau and Tony Leung, living almost parallel lives. Ming, planted in the police force by his triad boss Sam (Eric Tsang), trains hard and keeps a low profile to gather information. Meanwhile Yan, an undercover cop, infiltrates the triad to win Sam's favor.

Ming goes to extreme measures to prove his sworn identity, while Yan struggles and fights the urge to let justice prevail.

When the film hit theatres in Hong Kong, it was simultaneously released on home video on the Chinese mainland. The public release of *Infernal Affairs* in mandarin version for the Chinese mainland is scheduled for March 2003.



Photo provided by Media Asia Films

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HOME Sweet HOME

Bored with your house, or moving to a new one? Maybe you thought Ikea was the only choice for furniture in the City, but if you have a bit of cash to spare this New Year, you might want to try one of these high concept furniture and design stores.



BoConcept coffee table

BoConcept

By Huang Lisha

BoConcept is a Danish European furniture brand whose 200 specialty stores are to be found in 21 countries worldwide. Reasonable prices and practical style are the Danish brand's magic weapons.

Cherry and beech wood are the two major materials used, and brown and white are the designers' favorite colors, reflected in this season's Living series: most cabinets and coffee tables feature this color scheme. A brown cherry wood TV-STEREO Center (20,594 yuan), has attracted attention. It is separated into three sections. The middle part is for the TV set and stereo, and partitions on the left and right can store books and accessories.

Flexibility is the style BoConcept emphasizes: so most products are designed as composite furniture that can be self-assembled.

The Indivi Sofa Series is always the mainstay of BoConcept's range, and there is no exception this year. The "Magic sofa" is one of the most popular items. The seats, backs, and armrests can be arranged as you wish, giving as many different looks as your imagination affords. In addition, you can find vases, lamps, tealights, and office furniture.

Every BoConcept chain store features a workshop area where computers equipped with professional three-dimension Furnish-pro software can imitate your home's structure and arrange furniture and accessories according to your taste. The system can also provide an instant estimate of the total outlay you can expect, based on the furniture you choose.

Where: 4th Floor, Parkson Shopping Center, No.101 Fuxingmennei Dajie **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6607 3377



Vita lamps

Vita is Life

By Liang Hongling

When you think of Italian furniture, maybe the words extravagant and luxurious spring to mind. But a visit to VITA furniture center (Feng Yi De), which combines classic elegance and practical function, will change your preconceived ideas.

Founded in October 1997, VITA's showroom, representing twelve of the most important Italian names in interior design, opened in Beijing in February 1998.

The core concepts of VITA's range are beauty and practicality, with products to make your home both comfortable and functional.

The galleries inside the showroom have different themes, showcasing products for different moods you wish to create. You can come and drink an Italian coffee in "Cafe Milano" or simply sit in the "Venezia Library" and study Italian design or visit the "Firenze Gallery".

Apart from the wide range of furniture, VITA offers lighting, from simple to sophisticated, and a large collection of life style accessories. VITA often hosts evening events, so that people can better understand and appreciate the Italian way of life — you may want to attend for the atmosphere, even if you don't intend to buy.

If you are not an expert in furniture and decoration, the sales staff can help you choose, or there are specialists to consult if you need to plan the interior decoration of the home or office. Technicians will install and explain the correct way to use their products.

Where: No.2 Dongsanhuai Beilu, Chao Yang District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6468 3668



BoConcept working table

Furniture for the Kids

By Huang Lisha

Children are the important members for families whose needs definitely can't be neglected. Flexa is a Danish company with an over 30 year history, the biggest and most famous European child's furniture supplier, representing the highest quality and latest fashion in this field.

Safety and comfort are the two factors Flexa emphasizes. All products are made of natural wood, retaining the original color, and treated with an environmentally friendly, poison-free process. Even if your child attempts to chew his way out of his cot, he will suffer nothing more serious than a splinter.

Much thought goes into the design of this furniture. Recognizing that children have a tendency to grow, the beds are of adult proportions, while the heights of the beds, desks and chairs are adjustable, permitting many years of use. The company also tries to inspire children's imagination and creativity. "One bed has 1001 possibilities," boasts the advertisement.

Entering a Flexa store, it is clear they take to heart their slogan "The dream room of your dream child."

Everything is designed to win over the child. And if the child is won over, there is nothing for doting parents to do but ask, "how much?"

Where: B2, COFCO, Jiannei dajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6524 2726



TRUSSARDI bedding

TRUSSARDI

By Huang Lisha

It seems some of the most famous fashion labels are no longer content to confine themselves to clothing. In a new trend, many have extended their range into the realm of furnishings and accessories. Many distinguished brands, like GUCCI, have designed products for the home.

TRUSSARDI, an Italian brand famous for garments, accessories, and leather goods have also decided to take a share in this market. TRUSSARDI HOME targets customers who love fashion and pay a lot of attention to their standard of living. It offers simple and modern décor.

Yansha Youyi City has the first TRUSSARDI's home specialty store to open in China, starting business only one month ago. The HOME series inherits TRUSSARDI's design concept. The symbol of TRUSSARDI, a greyhound-looking dog can be found on many of the products

on display from porcelain plates and coffee cups, to wool shawls and rugs.

Bed linens are made from Egyptian cotton, usually embroidered, ranging from 9,000 to 15,000 yuan for the whole collection. The price is pretty high, which may make most people think twice, but as the

saying goes, "You get what you pay for." TRUSSARDI, at the forefront of high fashion, is sure to give you a home that will be the envy of all your friends.

Where: 5th Floor, Yansha Youyi City, Dongsanhuai Beilu, Chao Yang District **Open:** 9 am - 9:30 pm **Tel:** 6465 1188



Child's furniture





By Wenlong
Beijing Roast Duck has the reputation of being the most delicious food Beijing has to offer. Some find it a bit too greasy, but others get hooked after just one taste.

As the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau has issued new regulations banning the use of wood-burning fires in restaurants by 2008, Beijing Today has been to visit restaurants which still use traditional methods. The two most famous roast duck restaurants are Bianyifang Roast Duck and Quanjude Roast Duck, both of which have a history of over one hundred years. They represent two different schools of roasting duck.

At Bianyifang, founded in 1855, the roasting is done in an enclosed container fueled with crop stalks, so the flames won't directly touch the duck. Before being put into the oven, the duck is filled with soup to make it possible to roast the duck outside and boil it inside at the same time. At the better known Quanjude, founded in 1864, ducks are hooked over the flame coming directly from the burning fruit-tree wood for about forty minutes. The best roast duck is date-red, shining with oil, but with a crisp skin and tender meat.

Usually the duck is served together with pancakes, hollowed sesame buns, cucumber, Chinese onions and tianmianjiang (a sweet sauce made of fermented flour). The proper way to eat roast duck is first to dip the meat in the sauce, then put on the pancake with the onion and cucumber. Roll, and eat. Chopsticks are optional - it is much easier to use your hands!

When the duck is served, the chef will show customers the whole duck. The chef will slice into pieces with both skin and meat on the spot and serve directly to diners.

Nothing is wasted. Other parts of the duck will be served as either cold dishes such as salted livers, wings, and stomach or hot dishes made with heart, tongue and kidneys. The bones and other edible parts are even used for soup.

Both (Quanjude and Bianyifang) restaurants have started to experiment with new gas-fired or electric ovens in preparation for the new regulations, but along with duck lovers, worry that the taste will be changed.

There are now hundreds of restaurants serving Beijing Roast Duck all over the city. Most offer duck at 38 yuan each, cheaper than the above two renowned restaurants. Besides the roast duck, these restaurants also serve homemade style dishes and often serve seafood, such as shark fins. We have selected four restaurants to represent differing price levels in different regions of the city.



Jinbaiwan Restaurant

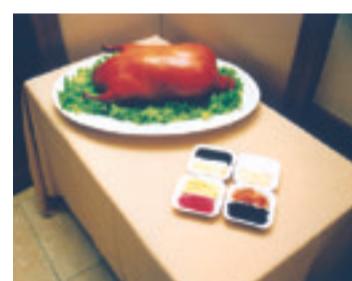
Roast Duck Rules the Roost

East: Chef Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant

The Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant was founded in 1985 under the leadership of its experienced chef Dong Zhenxiang. It has succeeded in winning the favor of expats in the city. With 25 well-trained and skilful chefs, the restaurant serves roast duck from three or four months old. After careful selection, the duck is roasted using wood from the jujube, pear or apricot tree.



Shredded beef stomachs pickled in soy sauce laotan baiye



yuan net each, exclusive of sauce, onion, and other condiments. A full set of condiments is eight yuan a person including the duck bone soup. Pancakes are served in a bamboo steamer, the same as Quanjude. The difference here is the use of white sugar to put on the skin - a way popularized by young ladies in the past.

The restaurant has a menu in English and Japanese - very convenient for expats. Diners can find information about the restaurant at <http://www.beijingduck.com.cn>. Reminder: the website has not been frequently updated and the special offers and online reservation have been canceled.

Add: No.3 Tuanjiehu
 Beikou, Chaoyang District
Open: 11:30am - 9:30pm
Tel: 6582 2982
Average cost: 60 yuan per person



Duck slices with condiments

South: Jinbaiwan Roast Duck Restaurant

This is a fast growing catering group and has cornered much of the lower price market with their quality service and delicious food. Now it has opened ten shops in the city. Of course, the 38-yuan roast duck is their signature dish and helped it attract

more customers. The one located on the southeast of the Yuting Bridge is a prominent restaurant in the area.

Occupying the whole fourth floor of the Meirenjie (Beauty Street) Shopping Mall, the branch store opened on June 2001. The table-ware and decorations are simple, but tidy and in good order. There is always a long line of diners waiting outside the door, clutching their numbers to get a table. A full duck dinner with all the accompaniments (cost 44 yuan), is more than enough to fill the stomachs of three hungry diners. The condiments are simple: just onion, shredded cucumber and tianmianjiang, not as comprehensive as Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant offers.

Other dishes deserving a mention are the grass carp boiled in hot red oil (shuizhuyu) at 38 yuan and fried shrimps (zha baixia) at 132 yuan per kilo.

Add: No.1 Section A, Fangguyuan, Fangzhuang, Fengtai District
Open: 11am - 9:30pm
Tel: 6767 7518
Average cost: 60 yuan per person

West: Dayali Roast Duck By Salinda

Located along the west third ring road, 100 meters west of Hangtian Bridge, this is the first of the Dayali chain of duck restaurants.

Nearby residents claimed there was not much difference between eating at the restaurant and at home. The dishes are designed to appeal to the general public at a relatively cheap price - on average, a meal will only set you back around 30 yuan per person. In the space of only four years, Dayali has already opened forty branches in the city.

Like some other restaurants, Dayali features ducks roasted over fruit-tree wood fires, and home-style cooking using a fusion of flavors from Sichuan,

Shandong and Guangdong. Though it cannot compare to Quanjude, to some degree, it is a good venue to have some cheap and tasty Beijing roast duck. The finished duck has characteristically crispy skin, tender meat and the fragrance from the wood fire. The plump duck looks appealing having a dark claret color and glossy skin. The taste is quite mild, and is served with pancakes, onions and tianmianjiang. The price won't leave a bad taste in your mouth either; a full duck dinner will only cost you 36 yuan.

Besides roast duck, the home-style dishes are worth a try, as Dayali always makes a point of cooking everything fresh. Each branch also offers some of its own specials. At this location, new dishes include pot-roasted mutton steak with soup (diaoguo xiaofeiyang), and fresh dog meat stewed with spicy oil (shenxian gourouguo), both of which are very tender, and have a strong fragrance.

As there is only room for about 150 diners, a reservation is advisable, or try one of the



other branches to be found throughout the city.

Add: No.18 Enjizhuang, Haidian District
Open: 11am - 10pm
Tel: 8812 8479
Average cost: 30 yuan per person

North: Golden Star Duck

This restaurant is not widely known, and only has one branch in the city. But the roast duck is really as good as any to be found in Quanjude (price 168 yuan). A full set of roast duck costs 82 yuan with Chinese onion, tianmianjiang and pancakes, but no cucumber. Diners can order shredded cucumber and sesame buns at two and five yuan.

The restaurant is an offshoot of the company which



Fried duck jaws lu yaxiba

still provides live ducks for Quanjude and Bianyifang - that's why reception manager Yang You assured the quality to Beijing Today with complete confidence. "Even our chefs graduated from the kitchens of Quanjude," said Yang. When



the restaurant started one and a half years ago, the pancakes were low quality and received complaints - a fault that was soon corrected.

The ducks all weigh over 2.5 kilos. When done, the meat is carefully placed on a duck-head plate - a personal touch Beijing Today only found at Golden Star Duck.

The restaurant also offers expensive dishes: rice with shark fin soup (yuchifan) goes for 88 yuan per person and stewed bird's nest (jipin yanwo) is 380 yuan.

Add: No.14 Beisanhuan Zhonglu, Haidian District
Open: 10am- 2pm; 5pm - 9pm
Tel: 6202 4477 ext.103
Average cost: 45 yuan per person

People who are interested in Quanjude and Bianyifang can contact them at the numbers below.

Qianmen Quanjude Roast Duck Restaurant
 Tel: 6511 2418
Hepingmen Roast Duck Restaurant
 Tel: 6302 3062
Bianyifang Roast Duck Restaurant
 Tel: 6712 0505



Photos by Lou Ge / Wang Yong / Li Shuzhuan

New Year Cards

The New Year is coming with our hopes and loves. Beijing Hui Ling is again selling cards and calendars to raise money for the disabled.

Your purchases will help people in need, and the cards and calendars make a perfect gift for the New Year.

Where: 18 Dashizuo Hutong, Jingshan Aianjie, Xicheng **When:** till January 31 **Tel:** 8404 3691 **Email:** hulin@163bj.com



Parties



Heating up the dark night

MIDI Music Festival

The music just keeps on going... To-night, see Yang Yi, Bu Yi, and Wild Children; Saturday, Bao Lou and Su Fang; Sunday, Ju Zi, Shen Lan Azul, Jazz Night; Triptych and Xiajia, Huangyong Jazz; next Wednesday, Junxiesuo, Mingjie and Zhan Fu perform and Thursday, DJ Ben, DJ HWW and DJ Tiger will be on stage.

Where: No. 2 hall of the Agriculture Exhibition Center (Nongzhangguan) **When:** 8-10 pm **Tel:** 6259 0007, 6259 0101 **Website:** www.midischool.com.cn



Color is performing

Many Many Bands!

All girl pop-rock outfit Color (Yan Se), will bounce onto the stage tonight; Saturday, Mountain People (Shan Ren) will rock your socks off with their hard driving tunes. Cotton Clothes (Bu Yi) has Beijing hippies hopping to their occasionally guzheng-based tunes.

Where: What bar, opposite north gate of Business and Economics University, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 13910 209249

Rose, Heavy Music and CMCB

Catch some acidic folk rock Friday, complete with cross-dressing lead singer! Saturday, Heavy Music Magazine presents a night of Heavy Music: Death metal to be precise. Rap metal superstars CMCB will perform Tuesday.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** adults 60 and 30 yuan, students 40 and 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

Happy Street

Xinjiang flamenco funkster Arken brings his dance to the tables tonight. Mirage and Purple Ring take the stage next Thursday.

Where: CD Cafe, south of Agriculture Exhibition Center, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6501 8877 ext 3032

Start with This

A night of heavy music includes Galaxy, Final King and steel barrel drumming, balaclava sporting pummel rockers Shi Jun.

Where: Starting Bar, opposite the west gate of Beijing Space and Aviation University, Haidian **When:** January 4, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8233 2264

Independent Producers

Electro beats and solo demonstrations by independent producers. Includes performances by musicians Hu Zi, Zhang Jian, FM3 and Liu Yue, as well as Independent producers Yan Jun and Wu Penju.

Where: White Cube, 38 Mao'er Hutong, Dongcheng **When:** January 5,

Tel: 6401 1675 **Email:** Lzh@msgp.org

Ladies Night

Every Friday and Saturday free entrance and drinks for chicks. Unlimited spirits, cocktails, beer and soft drinks. Music lover's paradise with all styles from House to Trance, R&B to Reggae, Funk to Rock, Dj's Zakk, Dazz, Heff, Maefu, and Anthony.

Where: West gate of Worker Stadium **Admission:** Guys 100 yuan (80 yuan for students) **Tel:** 6552 1786

Sports

The Mines and the Pines Hike

The mines are in a mountainous area of Changping District. There are nearly 10 mines in this area, including one from which a rare form of red marble is extracted, which is transported to Shandong province to be carved into ornaments for export. Amazing forested areas of pine trees with stunning peaks in the background.



Take to the hills in New Year

Where: Changping **When:** January 5, 8:30 am outside Starbucks at Lido Hotel, 9 am at Capital Paradise front gate **Cost:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701 003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Traditional Chinese Kung Fu

Self defense with Ma Dehong, lessons conducted in Chinese

Where: Da Bei Property Center, south section of East Second Ring Road, Chaoyang **When:** January 5 **Admission:** members free, guests 100 yuan **Email:** fitness@evolution-fitness.com

Stage

Hero

Not to be confused with the movie of the same name, the drama tells of a young boy who grows up to be a hero. Includes some impressive martial arts scenes. Director Wang Jianchun, starring Wu Yue.

Where: Beijing Seven Colour Light Children's Theater, A14, Ju'er Hutong, Jiaodaokou **When:** till January 10, 8 pm **Admission:** adults 50, 100 yuan students 40 yuan **Tel:** 13051 316163, 8402 2285



Scene from La Traviata

La Traviata

Performed by the China National Opera. Verdi's tragic story of ill-fated love between a courtesan and a writer will be conducted by Riccardo Casanova, winner of the first prize in the Italian Radio Competition for young conductors.

Where: Tianqiao Theatre **When:** January 10-13, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80, 180, 280, 380, 480, 680 yuan **Tel:** 6303 0300

Peking Opera: Wu Zetian

Starring Wu Rujun, Li Changsheng, Zhang Liwen, Kou Chunhua and Si Xin. Based on the life of the only female emperor in Chinese history.

Where: Chang'an Grand Theatre, 7 Jianguonei Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** January 10, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

Shanghai Writer

Director Shi Jun, starring Zheng

INFO

Ping, Han Ye, Ye Feng, Jing Songtao and Xuan Guoping. A love story about two beautiful women. One is a writer, who looks down on all the men around her. The other is an advertisement actor, who is interested in all men, but tires of her friends before long. In Chinese.

Where: Central Academy of Drama Theatre **When:** January 3-9, 7 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

New Stories

Director Lin Zhaohua, starring Li Jianyi, Jiang Qihu, Zhou Long, Wang Wen, Zeng Huanxin, Fang Bin, Li Daiwen, Zhan Xiaoxin and Han Ying. Performed by China National Opera.

Where: 67 Bei Bingmasi Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nadajie Dongcheng **When:** January 10-14, 7:30 pm **Admission:** adults 120, 200 yuan, students 30, 60 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 198

Activities

Russian Flavour in Beijing

A new Russian restaurant has opened in Beijing just in time for Russian New Year. Celebrate with live music and stylish and genuine Russian and European cuisine, a wonderful assortment of wines, and of course, a lucky draw.

Where: Beijing Mirage Restaurant, 4 Ritan Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** January 9, 6:30-8:30 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 8562 5228

London International Advertising Awards

Award winning entries from the London International Advertising Awards. Not only can you enjoy the art, you may learn something about creativity. English with Chinese subtitles.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng **When:** January 4, 7 pm **Admission:** 80, 120, 180, 280, 380 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

Modern Characters

Artist Yan Yu primarily focuses on character paintings; typical Chinese people, but with a distinguished and modern twist. His paintings are subtle, leaving the viewer slightly uncertain as to what the subject is thinking about.

Where: Artist Village Gallery, 71 Xiaopu Village Nadajie, Songzhuang, Tongzhou **When:** January 1-30, 9 am-12 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6959 5367



A poster for Advertising Awards

Movies

Sorry Baby

Directed by Feng Xiaogang, starring Ge You, Wu Qianlian. An extremely funny film about a rich businessman who loves to show off how much he is worth, but can never remember to pay his poor driver. The two engage in a hilarious feud that results in kidnapping, death threats and worse. Chinese with English subtitle.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** January 3-4, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398 **Email:** michael@cherrylanemovies.com.cn

Tutto L'amore Che C'e

Directed by Sergio Rubini. A story of love, friendship and sex in a small village in Italy's Puglia region. Carol is a 16-year-old boy eager to grow up, get away from his father and dedicate all his energies to his band in which he is a drummer. But his life is forever altered by the arrival of three girls from Milan. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy Cultural Office **When:** January 9, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187



A scene from Tutto L'amore Che C'e

Service

Church Service

The Gangwashi Church has a series of services every week, including Girls Group Worship, Youth Worship, Sunday Service.

Where: 57 Xishi Nandajie, Xicheng **When:** weekends **Tel:** 6617 6181

Exhibitions



Snow by Wang Yunshan

On the Mountain

Wang Yunshan from Hebei has been painting in ink for over 40 years. This exhibition features views of the mountains in winter.

Where: Fa Fa Gallery, 2 Xiangjiang Beilu, Jingshun Lu, Quanfa Garden Clubhouse, Chaoyang **When:** January 3-15, 9 am-10 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8430 2587

Young and Abstract

Jin Yuchao a recent graduate of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, paints in an uncluttered manner, a style purposefully reminiscent of traditional landscapes.

Where: Soka Art Centre, behind the British embassy, east of Xiusui Dongjie **When:** January 2-12, 1-7 pm (Tuesday-Sunday) **Tel:** 8561 9356

Oil Paintings Exhibition

Exhibition featuring works by Yu Xiaodong, Xiao Se, Xiao Hong and the famed seven-year-old artist Yangchun Beixue. The precociously talented Yangchun began painting at the age of one, and her pictures of singing and dancing people and birds sell for top-dollar prices. Yu Xiaodong has lived in Tibet for many years, and describes the people and their lives, and the beauty of nature.

Where: Qin Gallery, Huaweili Enjoy Paradise 1-1E (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang **When:** January 7-14, 9:30 am-7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8799 0461

Modern Characters

Artist Yan Yu primarily focuses on character paintings; typical Chinese people, but with a distinguished and modern twist. His paintings are subtle, leaving the viewer slightly uncertain as to what the subject is thinking about.

Where: Artist Village Gallery, 71 Xiaopu Village Nadajie, Songzhuang, Tongzhou **When:** January 1-30, 9 am-12 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6959 5367

Cool World by Lu Shen



Cool World by Lu Shen

Ink Painting Exhibition

Ink paintings by Lu Shen, Jia Haoyi, Li Xiaoke, Yang Gang and Han Shuli, all prolific and accomplished artists. Li Xiaoke specializes in traditional ink paintings of landscapes and figures.

Where: Creation Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu **When:** till January 10, 10 am-7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Scenery of the City's Edge

The artists of Songzhuang have chosen to live in the countryside, and are thus greatly influenced by nature. This exhibition describes the surroundings where a total of 300 artists live and work, using the village of Songzhuang as a backdrop.

Where: Blue Dream Gallery, opposite 46 Sanlitun Beilu **When:** till January 30, 9 am-12 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6415 5812

Art Exhibition

The exhibition features work by three well-known artists, Bob Yan, Yang Gang and Zhang Jin, covering both contemporary and traditional art styles. Bob Yan paints colourful scenes of daily life.



Jambeiyang Peak

Photo by Wang Jianping

By Wenlong

Yading Nature Reserve Park (亚丁自然保护区), located in the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (甘孜藏族自治州) of Sichuan Province, is now attracting a host of visitors seeking "the last Shangri-la" in China.

If the altitude of Daocheng (稻城) County doesn't leave tourists speechless, the magnificent mountains and meadows in the vicinity of this 4,000-meter-high plateau surely will. Holy snow-capped mountains, lakes and temples, once accessed only by the odd explorer, now attract a host of visitors.

Beauty has its price. Perched on a 4,000-meter-high plateau in western Sichuan Province, Daocheng County's brilliant vistas come at the end of a difficult journey at high altitudes, along rutted mountain roads and across endless windswept plains.

There are no airports or railways, just a winding road that's constantly under repair and more closely resembles a roller-coaster ride: The road passes through a 4,176-meter-long tunnel through Erlang Mountain (二郎山) and skirts several 4,000 to 5,000-meter-high snow-capped mountains. If the road is passable and the vehicle visitors are traveling in is in good working order, it is a bumpy two-day plus trip from Chengdu, the provincial capital, to Daocheng, which is near the Sichuan-Tibet border - during which one invariably develops a throbbing headache from the altitude. But it's remote location and the daunting journey have kept the hordes away, allowing Daocheng to maintain its pristine beauty.

Those who do undertake the trek are drawn to Daocheng's most famous attraction - the Yading Nature Reserve Park. Eighty-three kilometers south of the county's central town, the reserve is anchored by Nianqiong Konka Rizumgongba (念青贡嘎日松贡布) as the "three protective sacred mountains where the snow will never melt." The three peaks were blessed in the eighth century, when Buddha Padmasambhava (莲花生大士) shed his divine light on the range, and named the three

elevations after three bodhisattvas.

The 5,958-meter-high southern peak, Jambeiyang (or Yangmaiying in Mandarin (央迈勇), represents Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, while the eastern peak Chanadorje (Xianuoduoji 夏诺多吉), of the same height, stands for Vajrapani, the Bodhisattva of Wrath. As the tallest of the soaring trio, the 6,032-meter-high north peak, Shenrezig (Xiannairi 仙乃日), represents Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron-saint of Tibet.

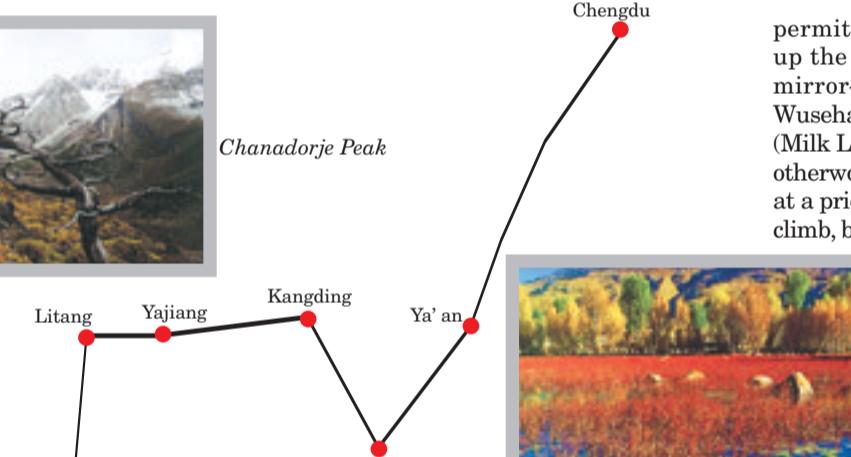
As leader of the US National Geographic Society's Yunnan-Sichuan Expedition, Joseph F. Rock, the renowned American explorer and botanist, visited Yading in 1928. Awe by the sacred snowy peaks, he wrote and took photographs for an article entitled "Konka Rizumgongba, Holy Mountain of the Outlaws," published in the National Geographic in July of 1931. "The Shenrezig peak resembles a huge white throne, such as Living Buddhas use when meditating - a worthy seat for a Tibetan deity!" wrote Rock. "In a cloudless sky before me rose the peerless pyramid of Jambeiyang, the finest mountain my eyes ever beheld."

Topped by a crown of snow and veiled by wispy clouds, the three peaks tower magnificently over a 1,280-square-kilometer area, but are visible only on clear days. Buddhists believe that a pilgrimage around these mountains is the spiritual equivalent of saying the Mani (吗呢) scripture 100 million times. But the site also attracted bandits, who believed that their earthly crimes would be forgiven at such a sacred spot. "We make a pilgrimage around the sacred peaks several times a year, and it's an arduous trip. We have to walk for more than 10 days and sleep in cowsheds," says Ci Zhen, a 26-year-old Tibetan horse-minder, who is accompanied on these pilgrimages by his wife, son and daughter.

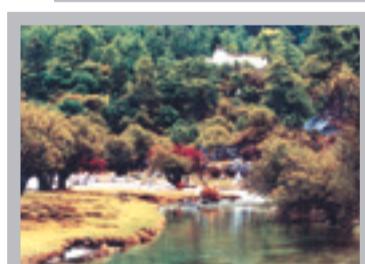
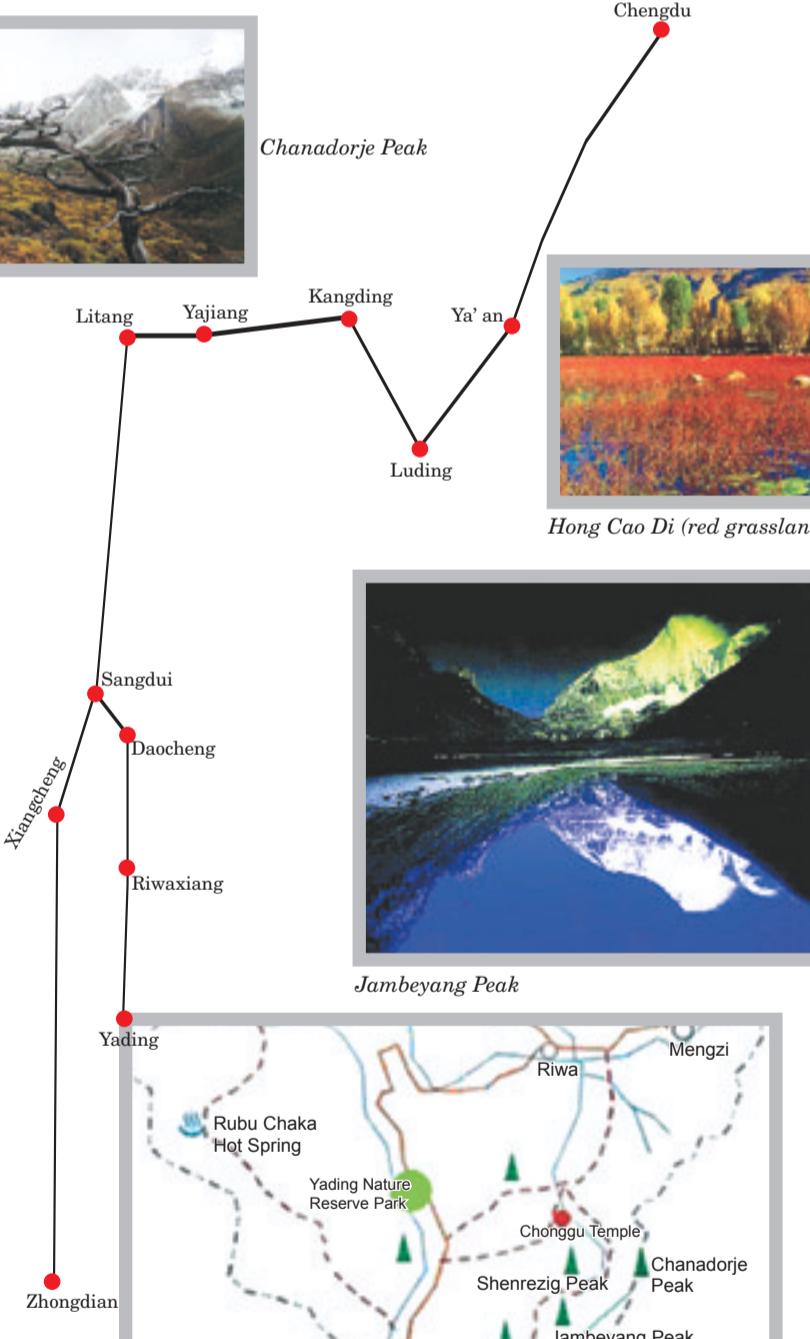
The best views of the three peaks are from the Luorong (洛绒) Pasture, and if energy



Chanadorje Peak



Hong Cao Di (red grassland)



Yading Nature Reserve Park

The beautiful countryside scene on the way to Yading
Photos by Mengqing / Jiaotu

permits, visitors can clamber up the peaks to behold two mirror-like sacred lakes, Wusehai (五色海) and Niunaihai (Milk Lake 牛奶海). This otherworldly spectacle also comes at a price, of course: It's a six-hour climb, broken into two legs,

camping overnight in the open pasture. If that seems too much, there is always Zhenzhuhai (Pearl Lake 珍珠海), an emerald-shaped sacred lake that's accessible without climbing.

The park itself is a green carpet of forests and plains inhabited by wild animals, isolated Tibetan villages, sacred lakes and a small monastery called Chonggu Temple (冲古寺). Imposing snowy mountains, golden grassland, streams twinkling in the sunlight and the azure sky form a beautiful backdrop for the 800-year-old stone temple built in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). After heavy rains, a silken fog hangs over the temple, creating a dreamscape that leaves one speechless.

A small, two-street Tibetan town, Daocheng is surrounded by wild countryside. The beautiful hills look like chocolate truffles, sprinkled with powdered sugar and red berries - which are in fact thin snow and red trees. The area seems torn from the pages of a fairytale - scarlet-colored meadows, infinite aspen forests, jewel-like pools and ivory Buddhist pagodas.

Yaks, the "plateau's black pearls," graze leisurely in the meadows where golden highland barley and purple wildflowers wave in the gentle breeze. The high-plateau county is home to an abundance of black sheep, pigs and birds.

Located 4 kilometers from the

town, the colorless, odorless Rubu Chaka Hot Spring (茹布卡温泉) is clean and drinkable, with a temperature of 68 degrees Centigrade. There are also hot spring spas, with pools for soaking. But perhaps the region's most interesting aspect is the inhabitants who still live off the land. About 96 percent of Daocheng's 30,000 residents are Tibetans, and thanks to their seclusion from the outside world, they are extremely hospitable to outsiders. Every passing jeep wins a smile, a wave and a greeting. With snow-capped mountains, prehistoric glaciers, steep gorges, luxuriant forests, crystal lakes and vast grasslands, both Yunnan Province's Zhongdian (中甸) and Daocheng lay claim to be the Shangri-la of legend.

"Shangri-la" is a Tibetan word, meaning "land of sacredness and peace," which came into common usage through James Hilton's description of a mysterious kingdom of the same name in his novel "The Lost Horizon." Shangri-la has come to describe a "heaven away from the turmoil of the mundane world" - a definition that only begins to capture the magnificence and splendor of Daocheng.

Getting there

A two-hour flight to Chengdu from Beijing, followed by a two-day bus trip from Chengdu to Daocheng, which departs from Xinnanmen Bus Station (新南门车站) (028 5446979) at around 6:30 am everyday, and finally a one-day bus journey from Daocheng to Yading.

Important reminders

Tourists with heart disease and hypertension are discouraged from making the journey as the altitude may worsen the condition. Colds are also to be avoided, as they can be dangerous there.

The best time to visit is in May, or from late September to mid-December.

Bring what you need — you won't find much in Daocheng - include film, warm clothes, cold and stomach medicine, and packaged food. Taking Hong Jing Tian (红景天), the Tibetan herb medicine, two days ahead of the trip may prevent an adverse reaction to the altitude.